

Amateur Photographer

FIRST LOOK



Canon EOS R

Hands-on with the full-frame mirrorless EOS R. Can it see off Nikon's Z series?

SECOND-HAND SPECIAL

Passionate about photography since 1884

Bargain hunt

Complete guide to **finding** and **using** second-hand kit

Guide to the best dealers

Buy with confidence from these top used camera specialists



AP readers' best bargains

Inspirational tales of getting **great shots** while **saving money**



Advice for sellers

Get the **best price** for your old camera or lens



Win big on a budget How competition winners triumphed with sub-£500 gear

M I R R O R L E S S R E I N V E N T E D

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CAPTURE TOMORROW

Z 7

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COVER PICTURE © ANDREW SYDENHAM

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Quality photographic equipment is expensive and always has been. But there is a way to get cutting-edge gear at a significant discount: buy second-hand.

If you purchase from a reputable used dealer you can save hundreds on quality kit in mint condition and get a decent guarantee, or you can trawl auction sites or boot fairs and potentially save even more, albeit at greater risk.

7days

A week in photography

This week's issue is dedicated to the benefits of buying used kit. We share our best tips and techniques for bagging a bargain, round up the UK's best used-camera dealers, and list our favourite lenses that you should look for on their shelves. Also AP readers tell us about their most canny purchases, and eight photographers tell us how they won photo competitions with cameras you can buy for under £500. Happy shopping.

Nigel Atherton, Editor

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ONLINE PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Solitude

by Raymond McBride

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 16-35mm, 181sec at f/11, ISO 100

This calming, long-exposure shot was uploaded to our Facebook page. It was taken by photographer Raymond McBride. He tells us, 'This image was taken on a vast sandy beach called Meols, situated along the northwest coast of England. It is home to a variety of boats that are a delight to photograph in all kinds of conditions. I generally follow the tide out, giving me enough water and ensuring it's shallow enough for the boats to be grounded, so I can capture long exposures. I used a Nisi V5 Pro holder with the Nisi 0.9 Medium ND Grad and Nisi 10 Stop ND filter. I also had the good, solid Manfrotto Neotec Pro Photo 458B tripod and a Really Right Stuff BH-55-LR ball head.'

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CD/DVD Send us a disc of high-resolution JPEG, TIFF or PSD images (at least 2480 pixels along its longest length), with a contact sheet, to the address on page 61.

Via our online communities Post your pictures into our Flickr group, Facebook page, Twitter feed, or the gallery on our website. See details above.

Transparencies/prints Well-packaged prints or slides (without glass mounts) should be sent by Special Delivery, with a return SAE, to the address on page 61.

NEWS ROUND-UP

The week in brief, edited by Geoff Harris and Amy Davies



Olympus cashback offer on flagship gear

Olympus has launched a cashback promotion on its flagship OM-D E-M1 Mark II and most of its M.Zuiko PRO lenses. For a limited time, purchases of the E-M1 Mark II will receive cashback of £175 (for Europe, €200). You may also add up to three M.Zuiko PRO lenses to your purchase and save £125 per lens, bringing the total cashback reward to £550. The deal runs until 15 January 2019. For full details, conditions and how to apply, see bonus.olympus.eu.

First lens adapters for Nikon Z mount

MTF is releasing what the company claims are the world's first lens adapters for Nikon's full-frame mirrorless Z mount. Aimed primarily at film makers, these will allow PL, Panavision, B4, ARRI, Canon FD and Canon EF mount lenses to be used. The adapters are due to be available from the end of September. For more information, see www.lensadaptor.com.



Rotolight gear now for hire

You can now try Rotolight lighting kit before you buy, via a new partnership with photographic rental specialists Hire A Camera. Users can arrange a three-day weekend hire, or weekday rental, of an Anova PRO 2, NEO 2, or AEOS. For more details, visit www.hireacamera.com/rotolight.

Light Benro gimbal carries that load

Benro has added a new gimbal head to its range, the GH5C, that can support up to 30kg despite only weighing 1.1kg. The carbon fibre Benro GH5C is particularly suited to wildlife and sports photographers with DSLRs or mirrorless gear, the company claims, and features an Arca-compatible quick release plate. The unit costs £440. See www.benroeu.com.



BIG
picture



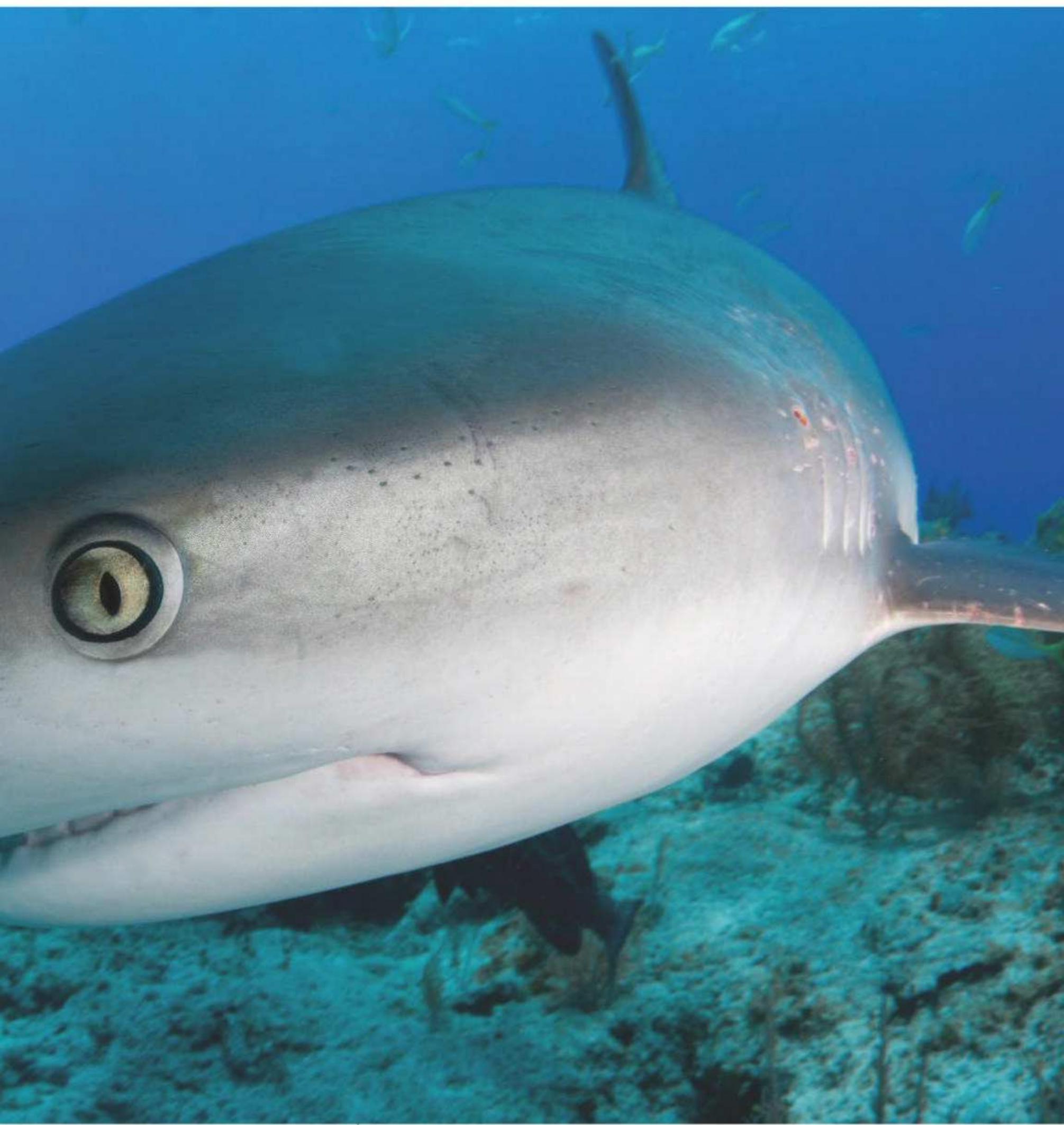
SmugMug revamps Flickr

Flickr owner, SmugMug, has updated the service's photo galleries with a new look, while adding new tools. The layouts are geared toward modern screen sizes and resolutions, and you can now have up to 500 images in your Flickr galleries, up from 50 images previously. Head to flickr.com to sign up, if you haven't already.

Face-to-face with sharks: a Bahamas adventure

For wildlife photographer Harry Skeggs a recent opportunity to get face-to-face with one of the world's deadliest creatures in the Bahamas was one not to be missed.

He tells us: 'The trip was inspired by my fascination towards big predators, especially sharks. There's something special about standing in front of an apex predator and



staring it in the eye – it's intimidating. I'm shocked by the reputation these animals have. It's estimated six humans are killed by sharks a year worldwide, compared to up to 100 million sharks that are killed annually by humans – so it's easy to see why their reputation is unjust! You can see more of Harry's images from this series on our website, including details on how he captured them. Visit bit.ly/skeggsharks.

Words & numbers

For a war correspondent to miss an invasion is like refusing a date with Lana Turner

Robert Capa
Hungarian photographer and photojournalist (1913-1954)

SOURCE: NIKKEI

87.3%

Canon, Nikon and Sony's combined share of the interchangeable-lens camera market in 2017



The new processor in the brand new X-T3 promises much improved AF performance



Canon releases fast telephoto primes

IN ADDITION to the release of the EOS R full-frame mirrorless camera and four lenses (see pages 8–9), Canon has announced two super-telephoto primes: the EF 400mm f/2.8L IS III USM and EF 600mm f/4L IS III USM. Both will be the lightest in their class, claims Canon, with the 400mm weighing in at 2,840g (previously 3,850g) and the 600mm at 3,050g (down from 3,920g). Five-stop image stabilisation helps when shooting handheld with both lenses, and they are weathersealed. In addition, fluorite lens elements reduce chromatic aberration, while a Subwavelength Structure Coating (SWC) minimises flare and ghosting. Both available from December, the 400mm is priced £11,999.99 and the 600mm is £12,999.99.

X-T3 is latest Fujifilm APS-C mirrorless model

FUJIFILM has announced the X-T3, which positions itself above the X-T20 and below the X-H1 in Fujifilm's X-series range of mirrorless cameras. While there isn't a huge resolution leap from the 24.3MP sensor on the X-T2 to the new 26.1MP APS-C X-Trans CMOS 4 sensor on the X-T3, it teams up with Fujifilm's latest X-Processor 4 imaging engine. The back-illuminated

APS-C chip has more phase-detection pixels, which now span right across the frame. The native sensitivity range of the new sensor runs from ISO 160–12,800 and can be expanded to ISO 80–51,200.

The low-light autofocus limit has also been extended by two stops from -1EV on the X-T2 to -3EV on the X-T3. Thanks to the new processor, a dramatically improved

autofocus performance is promised with substantially enhanced face/eye detection. Whereas the X-T2 had a 325-point AF system, the X-T3 has a much more sophisticated 425-point AF system.

Furthermore, the X-T3 boasts a 0.5in, 3.69-million-dot EVF with a high magnification ratio of 0.75x. It has a display time lag of just 0.005 seconds and refresh rate of 100fps. Unlike the X-T2, continuous shooting at 11fps with the mechanical shutter no longer requires the use of a battery grip, and blackout-free continuous shooting at up to 30fps is available when the camera's electronic shutter is activated.

The Colour Chrome Effect, previously only available in Fujifilm's medium-format GFX50S, is also carried across to the X-T3. It's intended to produce deeper colours and gradation in subjects with highly saturated colours. The X-T3 features a 3in, 1.04-million-dot touchscreen just like you find on the Fujifilm X-H1, and offers 4K/60p 4:2:2 10bit HDMI output and 4K/60p 4:2:0 10bit internal SD card recording.

It goes on sale on 20 September for £1,349 (body only) or £1,699 (with the 18–55mm kit lens). Look for our full review in AP very soon.

The new Fujifilm X-T3 builds upon the successful X-T2



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A photography project by Jude Wacks explores the issue of youth self-harm

Raising awareness of self-harm at school

JREGULAR readers will know that AP is a strong supporter of projects which use photography to help improve all aspects of people's lives. As children and young people go back to school this month, Jude Wacks, a London-based photographer, is looking to raise awareness of the growth in youth self-harm, which is affecting schoolchildren across the country. Her ongoing photography project, 'Best Days Of Your Life', explores a group of 18- to 20-year-olds who have all self-harmed throughout their secondary school careers. The images were

exhibited in London over the summer. She is now looking to take the photography project further by collaborating with relevant organisations and groups, adding new images of sixth formers and school leavers.

'As a parent of a teenage daughter who has grappled with mental health issues for a number of years, I have experienced the pain and trauma first-hand that self-harm causes to both the sufferer and their families,' Wacks explains. 'Throughout my personal experience and exposure to adolescent mental health issues during secondary school years,

I began to realise how widespread self-harm has become, but yet is still very much a taboo [subject]. Through this project I hope to raise awareness of this and give the silent pain a personal voice.'

Wacks says the new group of sixth formers and school leavers included in the project are very diverse. 'At first glance they seem to be an average-looking group of late teens. But when you start capturing them on film and talking to them, you see the pain that lingers within.'

For more information about the project, or to contact Jude, see www.judewacks.com.

Trump ordered editing of inauguration shots, says *Guardian*

JA US government photographer definitely edited official pictures of Donald Trump's inauguration to make the crowd appear bigger than it was, following a personal intervention from the president, according to a recently published story in *The Guardian*.

Following a freedom of information request in the US, the newspaper's reporters claim that the photographer cropped out empty space 'where the crowd ended' for a new set of pictures requested by Trump on the first morning of his presidency. AP readers will recall



President Donald Trump at his inauguration

Trump's ire over claims that the inauguration of President Obama attracted much bigger crowds. It's not clear which photos were edited, however.

For the latest news visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Back in the day

A wander through the AP archive. This week we pay a visit to September 2000



'OH! DE Cologne' – That is one of the most toe-curling puns to ever grace our preview of the 50th Photokina trade show in Cologne. Not even 'pun dog' deputy editor Geoff is likely to be able to top such excruciating word play in our forthcoming 2018 show report, but it will be essential reading anyway. Rewinding 18 years, we were getting excited about some big names, which like Ozymandias, have long since crumbled – Minolta and Kodak. Minolta, which subsequently got absorbed into Sony, was about to bring out the Dynax 7 SLR, which also made that week's cover; Kodak was expected to show off the Advantix Preview Camera, trumpeted as 'the world's first APS camera that lets you see a digital version of the image before it is developed'. Meanwhile sinewy Canadian rocker Bryan Adams was scheduled to appear on the Polaroid stand. Kodak was also reported to be working on a pro-lab system to give wedding couples their images on a CD. Give a picture CD now to millennial brides and grooms and they probably wouldn't know what to do with it.



In September 2000 we previewed that year's Photokina

Canon EOS R

Michael Topham

examines Canon's new full-frame EOS R mirrorless system



Single card slot

Canon, like Nikon, has opted for a single card slot. The difference is that the EOS R accepts SD memory cards.



Dual Pixel Raw

In Canon's DPP software, users can fine-tune the position of sharpness and perform other unique adjustments.

At a glance

£2,349 EOS R body only with EF-EOS R mount adapter

- 30MP full-frame CMOS sensor
- DIGIC 8 image processor
- 8fps continuous shooting
- Low-light AF down to -6EV
- 5,655 selectable AF positions
- 3.69-million-dot EVF

IT WAS only a matter of time until Canon responded to Nikon's entry into the full-frame mirrorless market. News of Canon releasing a smaller, lighter alternative to its extensive line-up of full-frame EOS DSLRs has been met with great interest from the millions of faithful Canon users around the world. The big question is: does the EOS R have what it takes to fight off Nikon and Sony in the competitive full-frame mirrorless market?

Features

Unlike Nikon who decided to kick off its full-frame mirrorless system with two models, Canon has opted to release one camera that will initially be supported by four Canon RF full-frame mirrorless lenses. The EOS R is based around a brand-new RF lens mount with a 54mm internal diameter, 20mm flange distance and 12-pin data connection that Canon says allows faster focusing and increased flexibility in lens design. Behind this mount lies a 30.3MP full-frame CMOS sensor that works in unison with Canon's latest DIGIC 8 image processor. This

pairing provides a sensitivity range of 100-40,000 that's expandable to ISO 50-102,400. As we're used to seeing from Canon, the sensor adopts Dual Pixel CMOS AF and boasts what Canon claims is the world's fastest autofocus speed of 0.05sec. Another world's first is the EOS R's ability to focus down to an extraordinary -6EV, which is supported by no fewer than 5,655 selectable AF points using the camera's touch-and-drag AF function on its 3in, 2.1-million dot vari-angle display. Above the screen you'll find a 3.69-million-dot EVF offering 100% coverage and 0.76x magnification. Set to continuous shooting, the EOS R shoots 1fps faster than the EOS 5D Mark IV at up to 8fps with fixed focus and can sustain this

speed for 100 JPEGs, 78 C-RAW images or 78 raw files.

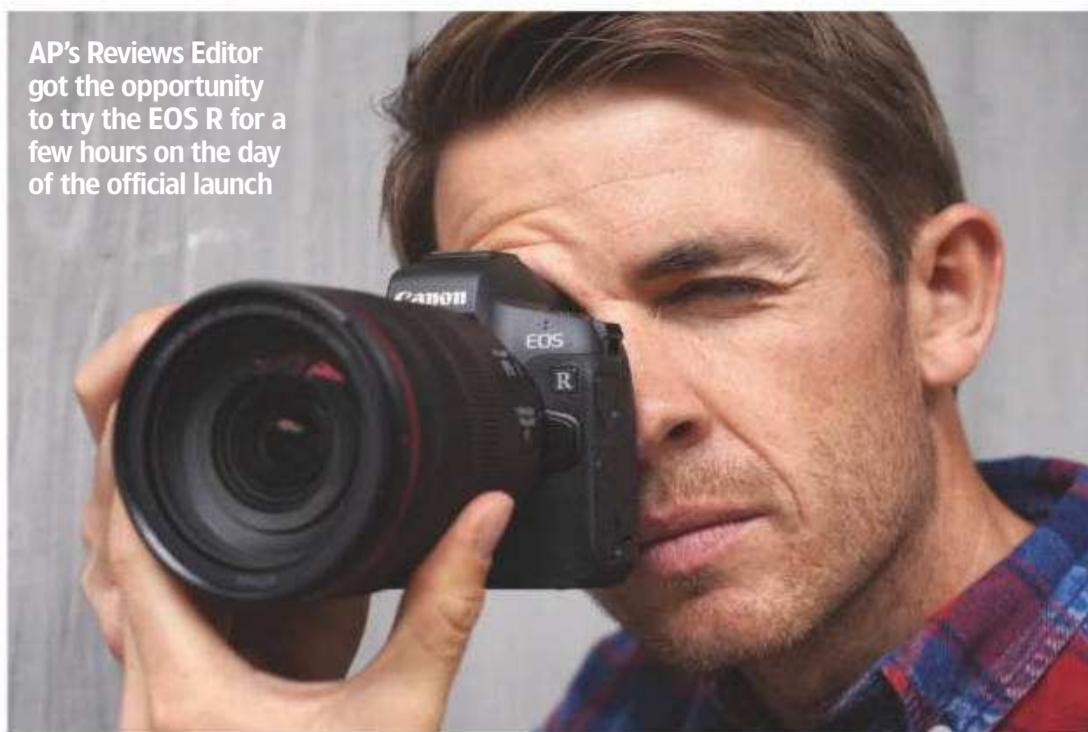


The EOS R features a 3in vari-angle touchscreen like the EOS 6D Mark II

ALL-NEW RF LENSES

THE INTRODUCTION of the new RF lens mount marks an important step in Canon's future and allows the company's engineers to design new lenses that weren't possible before. Whereas Nikon unveiled three native Z-mount lenses for its new mirrorless cameras, Canon has started by announcing four new optics for its EOS R system. One of the most exciting is the RF 50mm f/1.2 L USM (£2,349) – the fastest RF-mount prime lens currently available for the EOS R. The other prime that'll follow in December is the RF 35mm f/1.8 Macro IS STM (£519). These two fixed focal length lenses will be joined by two zoom lenses: the RF 24-105mm f/4L IS USM (£1,199) and RF 28-70mm f/2L USM (£3,049), which is the world's first large-aperture full-frame compatible standard zoom lens with f/2 brightness throughout the zoom range. Canon fully understands the importance of making sure existing EF and EF-S lens users can use their products with the new EOS R system, who will be relieved to hear that suitable adapters are available. More information on these can be found in the column opposite.

AP's Reviews Editor got the opportunity to try the EOS R for a few hours on the day of the official launch



Switching to AF tracking sees this burst speed drop to 5fps. The benefit of the EOS R's electronically controlled focal-plane shutter is that it provides silent shooting for when you'd like to work discreetly. Those who'd hoped Canon's full-frame mirrorless offering might incorporate in-body stabilisation (IBIS) will be disheartened. While optical stabilisation is featured on some of the new RF lenses (though not on the 28-70mm f/2 or 50mm f/1.2) and many existing EF lenses, the lack of IBIS on the EOS R could be viewed as a missed opportunity. Another area where EOS R falls behind its Sony and Nikon rivals is the lack of full sensor readout 4K video – a move that's presumably been made to ensure the company's Cinema EOS line-up isn't cannibalised. Like the EOS 5D Mark IV, the EOS R's 4K video has a 1.7x crop factor, with 4:2:2 10-bit video output available via the HDMI port. Internal 4:2:2 8-bit recording and Full HD 1080p video using the full width of the sensor at up to 60p is available. As well as microphone and headphone ports, there is always-on Bluetooth to ping and share images to and from mobile devices. USB charging is also supported via its USB C connector.

First impressions

With the EOS R, Canon sets its sights on challenging full-frame mirrorless cameras around £2,000. It has many positives – the build quality is top-notch, the vari-angle touchscreen is superb and the EVF displays a clear, crisp view. I was impressed by its ability to acquire focus in challenging conditions where it reacted quickly to both body and touchscreen based adjustments. I can't help but feel that Canon might have missed a trick though. The way it lacks a mode dial, AF joystick and introduces a finicky M-Fn control makes it feel more like a first-generation camera than one that's been refined over several years. The single card slot and four-way controller reiterate that it's going to feel more at home in the hands of aspiring enthusiasts than serious and professional users expecting an EOS 5D-series level of control. While the EOS R may have room for improvement, it's positive to see Canon enter the full-frame mirrorless market and I'm confident this is just the start of better things to come.

Build and handling

Its magnesium alloy chassis and nicely sculpted handgrip offer a reassuringly solid feel. Said to be weather-resistant to the same standard as the EOS 6D Mark II, the EOS R features a small top-plate LCD below which is a multi-function M-Fn bar that's personalised using slide or touch movements with your thumb. To access movie-mode you're required to hit the mode button followed by the info button and users will find almost every control on the body is customisable, including the customisable control ring on RF mount lenses that can be used to adjust aperture, shutter speed, ISO or exposure compensation. Existing Canon users will notice there's no mode dial or multi controller. Shifting the AF point around the frame is performed by hitting the AF point button and using the four-way controller or using touch and drag AF, which can be refined by setting the active touch area to a specific region of the screen. All in all, while the EOS R feels every bit like a Canon camera in terms of its build and finish, the layout of its controls makes it quite different to operate compared to the company's DSLRs. As such it will require new users to learn how to get the most out of it.

Three EF-EOS R mount adapters

CANON HAS acknowledged that in order to make its new EOS R system a success, it has to support its vast number of existing users around the world who shoot with EF and EF-S lenses. As well as a basic EF-EOS R mount adapter (£99) that allows more than 70 EF and EF-S lenses to be used with the EOS R system, Canon has developed an EF-EOS R control mount ring adapter (£199). This adds the control ring found on the new RF lenses, which in turn enable users to maintain the same level of customisation whether they are using RF, EF or EF-S mount lenses.

The third mount adapter is ideal for those who may wish to use lenses that might prove difficult to add filters to. The drop-in filter EF-EOS R mount adapter with

circular polarising filter will cost £299.99 and the drop-in filter EF-EOS R mount adapter with variable ND filter will cost £399.99. Each of the three adapters are built with professional use in mind and they're fully compatible with the autofocus and optical stabilisation of the lens that's attached.



The EF-EOS R adapter comes bundled with the EOS R body

New battery grip increases stamina

THE LI-ION battery (LP-E6N) that powers the new EOS R is claimed to be good for approximately 370 shots. Those who'd like to increase this shooting stamina to over 700 shots have the option to do so by fitting the EOS R with the optional BG-E22 battery grip (£329), which accepts a pair of Li-ion LP-E6N batteries. As well as providing extended shooting and enhanced handling in the portrait orientation with its well-positioned buttons

and dials, it features a PC terminal to allow traditional wired studio flash to be used with the EOS R. In addition, it provides a port just above the on/off switch at the side that allows both batteries to be charged via a USB adapter when you're out on location or on the move.



The new BG-E22 grip supports USB charging via a USB C port at the side



Viewpoint Andy Westlake

Buying second-hand can be the key to expanding your photographic horizons. Why not give it a try?

I have an incredibly privileged day job: I get to test out, and report on, all the latest and greatest photographic kit. This allows me to play with expensive top-of-the-range gear without the considerable inconvenience of having to pay for it. In turn, it gives me a rare perspective on just how much extra capability you get from buying the latest tech, compared to older equipment. In reality, a lot of the new features are nice to have, but far from essential. For many photographers, it's probably more cost-effective to upgrade their camera by buying an older model that has the features they genuinely need.

Of course I still have my own personal kit, and like almost everyone else in the world, I've assembled it on a fixed budget that precludes casually splashing out thousands of pounds on the latest camera body or super-telephoto lens. I try to avoid paying full price for anything; instead I either wait until an item I want is heavily discounted in a sale, or buy second-hand.

In fact buying used kit has long been my go-to option whenever I've wanted to add some extra capability to my outfit, such as adding wider, longer or faster lenses, or a different camera. My very first additional lens, when I outgrew the 35-80mm zoom that came with my first DSLR, was a second-hand Sigma 24mm f/2.8. Years later I bought a mint-condition Canon EOS 3 that served as my last regular film camera, before the appearance of the EOS 5D triggered my final transition to digital. I still have plenty of lenses that I acquired used, including an original Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro. It does the job perfectly well so I don't feel any need to update, despite knowing from personal experience that the newer iterations are technically superior. More recently a minor eBay addiction has seen me build



This picture was taken with a second-hand macro lens

up a good set of old Olympus OM Zuiko lenses that work nicely on my Sony Alpha 7 II, at a fraction of the cost of Sony's fine but pricey FE lenses.

Caveat emptor

In the past, buying used kit almost invariably meant picking up items from reputable dealers who checked them thoroughly before reselling, and offered three or six-month warranties. You can still do this, of course, but a big chunk of the second-hand market has now shifted across to peer-to-peer transactions on platforms like eBay and Gumtree. However many people are put off this approach by the risk of not getting what they paid for. Nobody wants to end up with a camera that has a worn-out shutter or a lens afflicted by fungus that the seller neglected to mention.

But this just means you need to take sensible precautions before buying used items. Check item descriptions and look at images carefully; if in any doubt, it's safer to give that bargain a miss, regardless of how tempting it may be. If you take sufficient care, you'll find that buying second-hand is a great way to expand your photographic horizons.

Andy Westlake is currently the Technical Editor of *Amateur Photographer*. For six and a half years he wrote for *Digital Photography Review*, writing numerous lens and camera reviews.

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the address on page 26 and win a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99

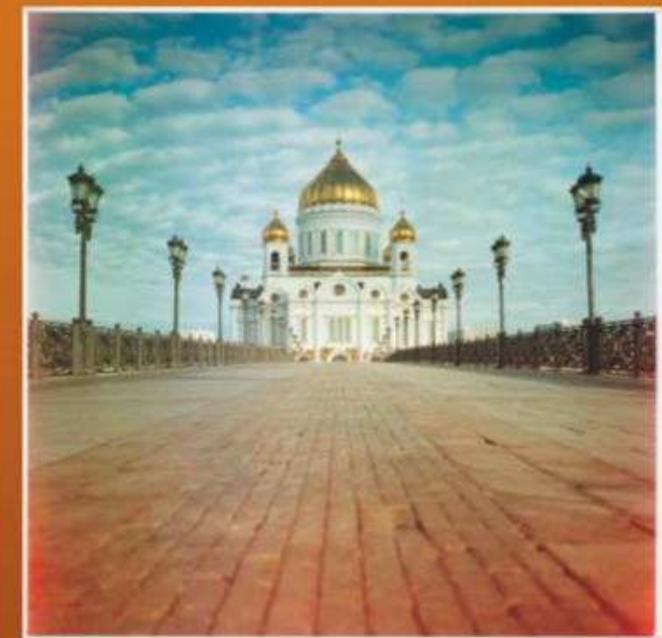
In next week's issue

On sale Tuesday 25 September



Compelling compositions

Give your photos the best visual design and impact with Ian Plant's top tips



From Russia with Lomo love

Rod Edwards discovers the joys of taking a film camera on a holiday

The big switch

A Nikon DSLR goes head to head with a Sony A7R III in James Abbott's field test

Elements of raw

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Success on a shoestring

Whether you use an iPhone or a compact, you can still succeed in big competitions. **Tracy Calder** speaks to eight photographers who did just that, using cameras that can now be had for under £500

If you've ever admired a prize-winning picture and felt your heart sink while reading the technical details, you're not alone. Sometimes it feels as if the only way to succeed in a major photographic competition is to sell your worldly goods and invest in a top-of-the-range camera. Look a little harder, however, and you'll find people who are

bucking the trend. Naturally, it's nice to have the latest gear, but there are benefits to making the most of what you've got. Working within limitations can increase your creativity, forcing you to think a little harder, for example. What's more, using an inexpensive camera can encourage you to take risks – such as shooting in extreme weather – free from the fear of damaging

your equipment. Essentially, though, the greatest benefit is that you have to get to know your camera, identify its foibles, and learn how to overcome them. If it lacks megapixels, for example, you will find yourself paying particular attention to composition to avoid major cropping (and therefore loss of quality) later.

Many limitations can be overcome by honing your photographic technique. At the end of the day, it's you who takes the picture – the gear is merely a tool to help you communicate your vision. To demonstrate this point, I spoke to eight photographers who prove that the best camera doesn't always win.



Michele Palazzo braved Storm Jonas in 2016 to take this image of New York's Flatiron Building
Ricoh GR, 18.3mm lens (approx 28mm in 35mm equivalent), 1/400sec at f/4, ISO 400



Bright spring ferns in the glasshouse at RHS Wisley created a beautifully sweeping, natural canopy with graceful line
Fujifilm X-E2, Fujinon 55-200mm, 1/180sec at f/3.5, ISO 500

Michele Palazzo

Winner: Cities, Travel Photographer of the Year (2016)

Pre-owned Ricoh GR (with fixed lens) around £350

WITH a background in architecture, it's no surprise that Michele Palazzo felt inspired to shoot the Flatiron Building in New York City. But few people would brave the task during one of the biggest storms NYC has ever seen. 'On 23 January 2016, a blizzard hit the west coast of the USA,' recalls Michele. 'I woke up early – I was excited about the storm, and was hoping to capture pictures of people struggling in the snow.' But New Yorkers are used to extreme weather and it wasn't until he was standing in front of the Flatiron Building

that Michele knew he had something special. 'I was struck by the way the wind and snow swirled around the building,' he explains.

The day before he made this picture, Michele sold his Fujifilm X-T1 to help pay for an X-Pro2, so the only camera he had on him that day was a Ricoh GR. 'Don't get me wrong, I loved my GR, but I mostly used it for street work as it was discreet and fast,' he explains. 'I think the main limitation was the lack of a viewfinder, and the fact that it's not waterproof – it died after that morning in the storm!'

Michele posted the image on social media and it went viral. 'It changed my career,' he reveals. 'There are so many pictures of the Flatiron Building, it's hard to come up with something original. What's special about

Jocelyn Horsfall

Finalist: The Beauty of Plants, International Garden Photographer of the Year (2017)

Pre-owned Fujifilm X-E2 (body only) around £250

WHEN Jocelyn Horsfall purchased a Fujifilm X-E2 four years ago, she was looking for a smaller, lighter alternative to the Canon EOS 5D Mark II she already owned. 'I chose the X-E2 because of the user-friendly menu system, bright electronic viewfinder, focusing aids (such as peaking and magnification), build quality, and price,' she explains. She took this 'out-and-about' camera to one of the early morning openings held at RHS Wisley in Surrey. 'Having wandered around outside for a few hours, I ventured into the glasshouse and was immediately struck by the photographic potential of the green ferns backlit against the window,' she reveals. 'I loved the freshness of the foliage, and the mixture of detail and impressionistic backdrop.' Having spent a while in the same location, Jocelyn began to develop a more painterly approach to the subject, which she accentuated using Topaz Labs software during post-processing.

Jocelyn describes the image quality she gets from the X-E2 as 'superb', but points out that the camera is not perfect. The battery life, for example, is rather lacking. 'I always carry three full batteries with me when I go out shooting,' she admits. 'But if you have a quick-release plate screwed into the tripod thread (which I usually do) you can't get at the battery/card compartment. Given the frequency with which you might need to change the battery, having to keep unscrewing the plate is quite tedious.' Niggles aside, it's clear that Jocelyn knows how to get the most out of her camera.

JOCELYN'S TOP TIPS

'Familiarise yourself with the menus, layout and shortcut buttons on your camera, then customise them to suit the way you work. On my X-E2, for example, I have assigned function buttons to alter the ISO and white balance.'

Visit www.jocelynhorsfall.com

this picture is that it's hard to make out if it was taken recently or years ago. The camera did a great job.'

MICHELE'S TOP TIPS

'It can be tempting to go out and buy new equipment, but working with limitations can lead to greater creativity. If you don't have a long lens, for example, you have to walk closer to your subject, leading to a different point of view. It's far better to master a simple tool than to only use 10% of what a complicated tool is capable of.'

Visit www.streetfauna.com, Instagram:

@streetfauna. You can order a limited-edition print of the Flatiron image at www.streetfauna.com/buy-prints

HOW TO WIN COMPETITIONS

Nick Joyner

Commended: Adult Your View, Take a View: Landscape Photographer of the Year (2017)
Pre-owned Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX8 around £400

 HAVING recently attended a course on ICM (Intentional Camera Movement) and multiple exposures, Nick Joyner was keen to practise his new-found skills, and so headed to one of his favourite haunts, Canary Wharf in London. 'I live nearby and often go there to shoot the reflections in the docks,' he explains. 'On this occasion, having photographed the water for a while, I turned my attention to the surrounding buildings.'

For this image, Nick used the in-camera multiple-exposure facility on his Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX8 and overlaid four exposures to create a complex grid. 'It was sufficiently abstract to tolerate fairly extreme changes to colour balance and saturation, and this was the most satisfying shot of the day,' he says.

Before buying the GX8, Nick had been using a GX7 alongside his Nikon D800. 'With a zoom attached, I was finding the Nikon too big and cumbersome to use when travelling and handholding,' he reveals. 'I looked at Olympus and Fujifilm, but I just like the feel of the Lumix models, and the price of the lenses is very reasonable, too.'

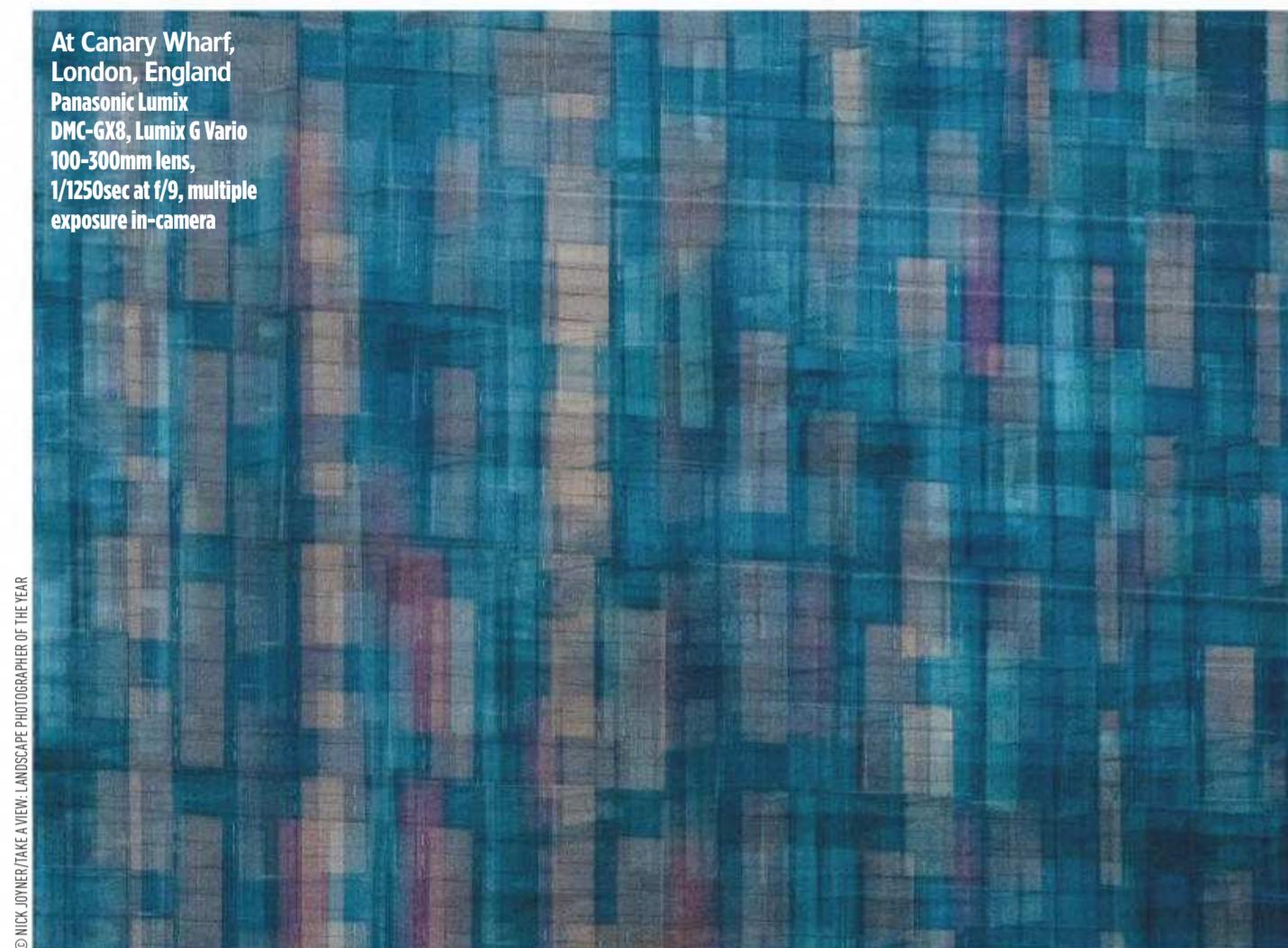
Nick soon found that he was leaving the Nikon at home more often than not, without noticing a big reduction in image quality. 'The GX8 has a better multiple-exposure function than the D800, although it does lack in-camera blend modes,' he explains. 'But one of the biggest benefits is that it's easy to take sharp handheld images with the Lumix range, providing greater flexibility when you're superimposing frames.'

NICK'S TOP TIPS

'If you're using the multiple-exposure facility on the GX8, reduce the exposure of later shots in the series to balance the image. Try handholding: the image-stabilisation system is so good, I rarely use a tripod these days – except for long exposures. Consider buying second-hand: I bought a Panasonic/Leica 25mm f/1.4 lens and it has barely been off my camera.'

To see more of Nick's work, visit www.nickjoynerphotography.com, Instagram: @nickjoyner55, Twitter: @nickjoyner55 and Flickr: Nick Joyner

At Canary Wharf, London, England
Panasonic Lumix
DMC-GX8, Lumix G Vario
100-300mm lens,
1/1250sec at f/9, multiple
exposure in-camera



© ANDY HOLLIMAN/OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Andy Holliman

Winner: Spirit of Travel, Outdoor Photographer of the Year (2017)
Pre-owned Nikon D700 (body only) around £375

ANDY Holliman carried out a lot of research before buying a Nikon D700, his first DSLR. Having used Minolta film cameras until then, it was a steep learning curve. But switching to digital reignited his passion for photography, and he soon found his motivation for travelling changing, too. 'Whereas before I had taken a camera with me on my travels, after buying the D700 I was travelling for photography.'

On one such trip, Andy found himself stranded at Kangerlussuaq airport in Greenland, where he took this picture. 'Air Greenland has a near monopoly on flights here, so almost everything is in the company's red colours,' he explains. 'The simple colour palette of this scene appealed to me.' However, Andy had to work hard to balance all the elements. 'There weren't a lot of options for changing viewpoint, but everything

came together when the plane taking me back to Denmark arrived in the background and added the final piece to the jigsaw,' he recalls.

As he got more into photography, Andy discovered limitations with his gear (particularly the ISO performance and AF speed), and eventually upgraded. However, he's still of the opinion that money spent on travelling and investing in photographic tuition has a far more beneficial effect on your photography than buying new gear.

ANDY'S TOP TIPS

'Anyone after a robust, inexpensive camera – perhaps to risk in harsh conditions – would do well to consider the D700. In most situations, the limitations can be worked around by improving technique: use a tripod to keep the ISO at the native 200, and be careful to compose accurately to avoid too much cropping later, for example.'

Visit www.allthisuselessbeauty.co.uk, Instagram: [@da_holy_man](https://www.instagram.com/da_holy_man), Facebook: www.facebook.com/AndyHollimanPhotography

Kangerlussuaq
airport, Greenland
Nikon D700, 28-300mm lens,
1/320sec at f/11, ISO 200



Rainbow Rising Canon EOS 70D, Canon 400mm lens, 1/800sec at f/6.3, ISO 200

Simon Carder

Commended: Birds in Flight, Bird Photographer of the Year (2017)
Pre-owned EOS 70D (body only) around £400

SIMON Carder was walking around a wetland reserve in Somerset when the heavens opened. 'I ran for the nearest shelter, which happened to be a hide,' he recalls. At first, there didn't seem to be much to photograph, but as he was drying out, a rainbow appeared and something (probably a peregrine) spooked a flock of lapwings and other waders. When the flock took off, I grabbed my camera – a Canon EOS 70D – and fired away as it flew past,' he recalls. 'Exposure was tricky as the birds were wheeling and showing me their white underbellies.'

Simon bought the 70D in 2015, having upgraded from an EOS 700D, and created this image soon afterwards. 'The 70D was a big improvement over the 700D in terms of ISO, although I still tried to keep it at 800 or less,' he says. 'I liked the Wi-Fi capabilities of the 70D, and the image quality was (and still is) good. I think it's important to get to know your equipment before buying anything new. I spend a lot of time researching what the real benefits will be if I upgrade, and once I have taken the plunge I read the manual from cover to cover. I set the camera up for my own preferences, such as back-button focusing, before I take a single shot. It's still a learning curve in the field, but if you don't get to know your gear and develop your technique, you won't get the benefits – and buying new equipment isn't going to help.'

SIMON'S TOP TIPS

'Shoot when the light is good, use raw and get things right in-camera. The less cropping you do, the better the final image will be. These tips are not specific to the 70D, though – photography is more about developing good technique than the camera you use. Knowing your equipment inside out is vital.'

Visit www.simoncarderphotography.com

'If you don't get to know your gear and develop your technique, you won't get the benefits – and buying new equipment isn't going to help'



© STEPHANIE DE LUCA/PINK LADY FOOD PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Fishy tail Apple iPhone 6s, 4.15mm lens, 1/35sec at f/2.2, ISO 25

Stephanie De Luca

Finalist: On the Phone, Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year (2018)
New Apple iPhone 6s from £439

FOOD stylist and photographer Stephanie De Luca is a minimalist at heart, and her love of pared-back simplicity shows in this striking picture of a mackerel tail. 'I enjoy showcasing subjects in their most pure, stripped-back form,' she explains. 'The limited colour palette here brings out the texture of the fish, and the subtle sharpening (using an app) helps the viewer to notice the oil drops and salt and pepper seasoning.' It's a deceptively simple image.

Stephanie took the picture on an Apple iPhone 6s, her smartphone of choice at the time. 'When I'm in the kitchen, I can't be playing around with settings on a camera, so whipping out my iPhone is convenient – especially with mucky hands,' she says. But using an iPhone for macro subjects can be problematic. 'I sometimes pop my left hand next to the subject, tap and hold the focus on my hand, and then withdraw it. If my hands are really shaky and I'm struggling to focus, I rest my phone on a coffee mug or the edge of a table.'

It may be true that the iPhone 6s has fewer pixels than many of its rivals, but Stephanie is keen to stress that with the help of a few editing apps, it is capable of producing really strong images. 'I've been known to use VSCO, Snapseed and Color Story to bring up the exposure and sharpen my pictures,' she explains. 'Make a formula and stick to it: consistency is key to creating your own style.'

STEPHANIE'S TOP TIPS

'Play around with the HDR feature on the iPhone 6s – this is a great way to add drama and bring out fine detail. Enable the grid function, as well; it will help you to keep everything straight and make you think about your composition. If you're using an editing app, don't be too heavy handed; if I use a filter on one of my images it's only at about 30-50%.'

To see more of Stephanie's work, visit www.stephdeluca.com, Instagram: [@stephanie_de_luca](https://www.instagram.com/stephanie_de_luca)

'Make a formula and stick to it: consistency is key to creating your own style'

Steve Palmer

Winner: Botanical Britain, British Wildlife Photography Awards (2017)

Pre-owned Pentax K-5 IIs (body only) around £350

STEVE Palmer paid numerous visits to Lindow Common in Cheshire before conditions were just right for the image he had in mind. 'I had been fascinated by the common reeds there for quite a while, but on this particular occasion the water was still and the light, texture, colour and reflection caught my eye as I was walking around the lake,' he recalls.

In order to achieve the composition he desired, Steve attached a 1.4x converter to his 300mm lens and teamed it with a Pentax K-5 IIs. 'I like this particular camera because it's small, tough, and produces great images,' he says. 'I bought it second-hand, and was initially attracted by the weathersealing (I shoot a lot outdoors) and lack of an anti-aliasing filter. This, coupled with a range of relatively inexpensive legacy lenses, made it the perfect choice for me.'

All cameras come with quirks, however, and Steve learnt to accept

and overcome those of the K-5 IIs. 'There is no one perfect camera that will secure you a winning shot,' he advises. 'The autofocus on the Pentax K-5 IIs is not the best in its class, for example, but learning to focus manually, judge where a moving subject will head to next, and control depth of field effectively has helped me to overcome these things'. For Steve, it's more about developing your eye than splashing out on new equipment. 'It doesn't matter how much you spend. Without the ability to see images around you, you will never develop as a photographer,' he advises.

STEVE'S TOP TIPS

'Put your eye to the viewfinder and learn where every button and switch is without taking your eye away. Being able to change things while concentrating on your subject can help you to capture that "moment". Extend battery life and improve handling by using a battery grip. Learn to see: this applies to every camera from the cheapest to the most expensive.'

Visit www.stevepalmer.photography, Instagram: [@sillypigsplay](https://www.instagram.com/sillypigsplay), Twitter: [@sillypigsplay](https://twitter.com/sillypigsplay)



© STEVE PALMER/BRITISH WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS

Reeds, Lindow Common, Wilmslow, Cheshire
Pentax K-5 IIs, Pentax smc DA* 300mm lens (with 1.4x converter), 1/500sec at f/8, ISO 800

Three Princes
Apple iPhone 6s,
4.15mm lens, 1/210sec
at f/2.2, ISO 25



Stuart Ovenden

Finalist: On the Phone, Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year (2018)
New Apple iPhone 6s from £439

 **PHOTOGRAPHER** and author Stuart Ovenden is passionate about simple, seasonal and foraged food, which recently led him to produce *The Orchard Cook*, a book stuffed with sweet and savoury recipes. Looking through his Instagram feed, it's easy to see why his clients include *BBC Good Food Magazine*, *Condé Nast Traveller* and *The Telegraph*. Stuart has been highly placed in the Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year competition a number of times, and the image here made him a finalist in the 2018 competition. 'I photographed the pumpkins outside on a grey day,' he recalls, 'but there was a touch of directional light, so I managed to get a bit of shadow.' The muted colour palette and contrasting textures make this a striking still-life image.

The picture was taken on an Apple iPhone 6s. 'I love the camera on the 6s, and I find Apple screens are the best for me in terms of accurate colour balance for processing,' says Stuart. However, he has

encountered one or two obstacles while using the phone for food photography.

'I sometimes have trouble with camera shake in low light, but I have an adapter that allows me to use a tripod, and I combine it with a remote shutter-release switch,' he reveals. While he's certainly not opposed to using more advanced camera gear, Stuart doesn't believe that you need the latest equipment in order to shoot food. For him, it's more about how you apply technology than how much of it you own.

STUART'S TOP TIPS

'When I'm using the iPhone 6s, I like to underexpose my pictures – it's easier to brighten an image than pull back burnt-out detail. Experiment with apps to process your pictures. Finally, make sure that the phone is set to the maximum file setting and quality to ensure the best detail.'

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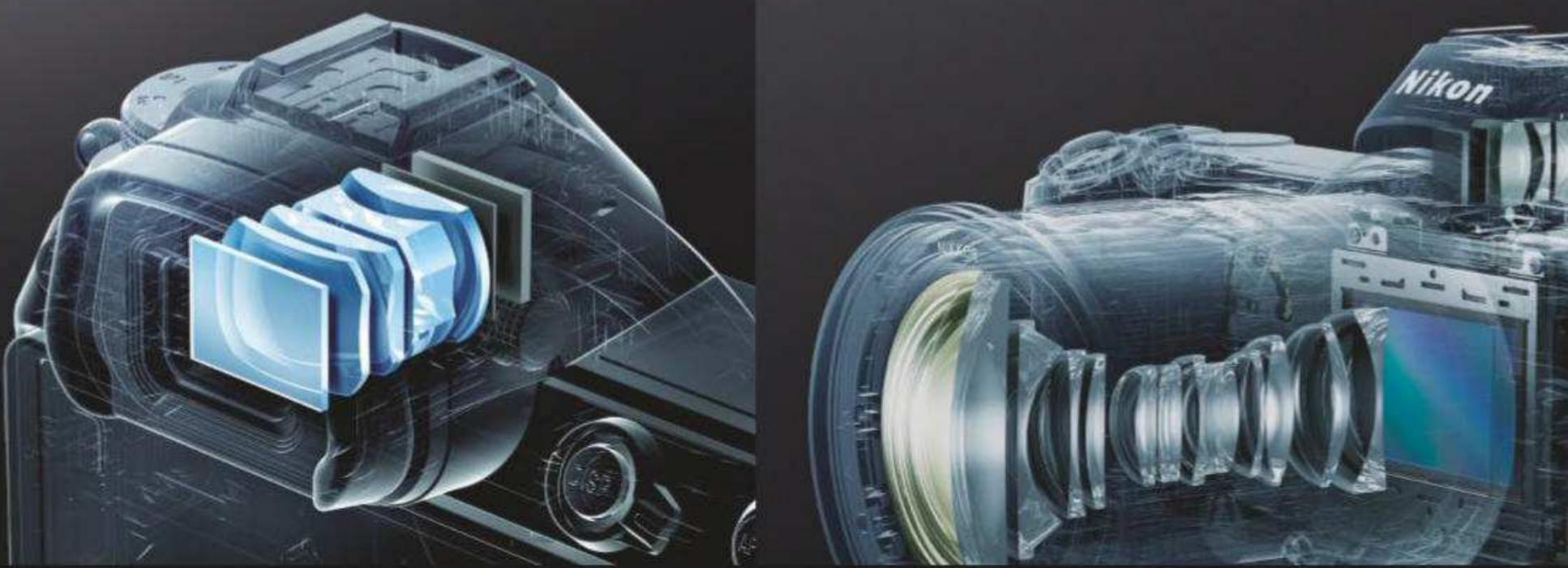
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Your local camera shop will have a second-hand section that may give you an indication of price



GETTING THE PHOTOS RIGHT

Photos are essential when you're selling online and they're useful with private sales, too. Here's how to



Background

If you have a still-life table, now is the time to dust it off. If you don't have one, you just need a regular table and a plain wall to create a clean background. To go the extra mile, use a sheet of white card to create an infinity curve.

Lighting

If you have studio lights, either flash or constant, these can illuminate your gear. The aim is to have diffuse soft light, so use a softbox or bounce the light. Alternatively, use natural light or household lamps, but the latter will need some diffusion – tissue can work well.

White balance

Mixed lighting may confuse the camera's auto white balance system so if necessary set a custom WB to get the correct-looking colours. The method varies by camera manufacturer but it basically involves photographing a grey card or neutral target to calibrate the system.



Angela Nicholson

Former AP technical editor Angela Nicholson began reviewing camera gear in early 2004 and has used an array of kit in a wide range of conditions, often pushing it to extremes to test its limitations. Follow her on Twitter @AngeNicholson.

Closing the sale

Old, unused camera gear can take up space and gather dust. **Angela Nicholson** tells you how you can turn it all into cash

When most people first get into photography they usually have a camera and a lens or two. Then a little way down the line they may add another lens, a flashgun and the odd accessory, perhaps. The next step is often an upgrade to the camera itself before investing in more (better) lenses. This continues until one day you realise you've got stacks of kit but you actually only use a fraction of it.

The logical solution is to sell what you are not using. It's sitting there depreciating in value, taking up space and gathering dust when it could probably be helping someone else get into photography and capture great images. A result of that transaction, of course, is that you'll have a nice cash injection that you can use to fund your next purchase. But how do you go about selling your second-hand kit?

get the shots you need to make that sale



Exposure

Don't worry about blowing out the white background. The aim here is to make the camera look good and for all the details to be visible. As you'll be shooting quite close to the camera you'll need a reasonably small aperture to give you plenty of depth of field.



Details

After you've got general shots of the camera from all angles, shoot any accessories that are included such as the battery and charger. Also go in a bit closer, ideally with a macro lens to shoot the key details. With lenses, people like to see that the front element isn't scratched.



Damage

If your camera is showing signs of wear and tear or has the odd scratch, make sure that you get a shot of it. It can be helpful to include a ruler or something instantly recognisable, such as a coin, in the frame so that buyers can judge the scale.

Technique SELLING YOUR GEAR



© GETTY IMAGES - TOMASZ ZAJDA / EYEEM

Many camera retailers offer trade-in discounts on new kit



Where to sell

There are several options for selling second-hand kit. A private sale is likely to bring you the most amount of money. If you're lucky you may even know someone who's in the market for the kit that you want to sell. This would be a nice and easy sale with minimal hassle. The only downside is that they might expect 'mate's rates' and if anything ever goes wrong with the gear, they may let you know about it at every opportunity even if it wasn't your fault.

The classified advertisements in your local paper are also a simple option, but they're not targeted at your specific market so it may take a long time to sell your kit. On the plus side, you can probably hand deliver the camera so that you don't incur any postage costs. However, the buyer may want to haggle a bit at the moment of sale, pointing out any flaws in the camera – even those you mentioned in the advertisement.

Online auction sites like eBay are another popular option. Bear in mind however, that there are fees to pay, which will eat into your takings. Most people also like to buy from sellers with a good

'A trade-in bonus can make trading in a camera much more attractive'

history, so if you've not used the site before, you may want to reconsider.

Facebook's Marketplace is proving an increasingly popular online option for selling because there are no fees and you can market your kit in the local area. That means you get all the money and you don't need to send it through the post.

Many camera retailers will also buy your used gear from you. However, they won't want kit that will be sitting on their shelves for ages, and if they sell it on through eBay they will incur costs. That means that there is likely to be a commission to pay. This could be in the region of 15% or 20% depending upon the ticket price.

In addition there are companies like mpb.com (www.mpb.com/en-uk/) and Camera Jungle (www.camerajungle.co.uk) that specialise in selling second-hand camera gear. Just like a high-street retailer, they buy your kit to sell it, so

you probably won't make as much money as you would through a private sale, but it's quick and efficient.

Trade in

Many camera retailers offer trade-in discounts on new kit. The idea of handing over your old kit for money off a new camera is appealing – it sweetens the deal. It's also nice and quick with no postage to worry about.

However, Sarah Jones at Cambrian Photography (www.cambrianphoto.co.uk) in Colwyn Bay, North Wales, advises her clients to sell privately if they can, as this will get them the best price. Her caveat is that from time to time manufacturers offer trade-in bonuses. A trade-in bonus can make trading in a camera much more attractive. In some cases you might get an extra £100 on the trade-in value and when there are deals like that to be had, she says that trading in is the way to go.

Preparation

However you decide to sell your camera, you need to do a bit of preparation to get a good price. Most buyers like to see that the original packing is available.

Your selling options

There are several ways to sell your gear, so let's take a look at the most popular



© GETTY IMAGES/PK.PHOTOS

Classified advertisements

Most local papers carry classified adverts and they're a cheap, simple means of selling your kit. Before you place an advert, take a look at the type of adverts that usually appear. Is anyone else selling camera gear and do the same adverts appear week after week? The adverts are usually very short so you can only include basic information, but adding an email address to request photos may help drive interest.



Local retailer

Your local camera shop is a logical port of call. If they have a second-hand section they will be able to give you an assessment of your camera and then suggest a price. They will also be able to give you some indication of the popularity of the gear you're selling to help you to decide whether to sell it privately or not. Expect to pay commission for selling your gear.

The eBay page shows a search bar and a sidebar with categories like 'Cameras & Photography Equipment'. A prominent banner says 'Refurbished Photography - Save up to 50%'. Below the banner are several camera-related product images and a 'Shop Now' button.

eBay

On eBay it's easy to create a listing with a 'Buy it now' price or auction your gear. It's free to list up to 20 items per month and you pay 10% of the final sale price (including postage). A cheaper option might be selling via Gumtree, which is free for everything except 'priority' small ads. Most buyers like to pay via PayPal as it's free and safe, but as the seller, you pay 3.4% of the sale price plus 20p per transaction.

The mpb.com page features a 'SELL FOR CASH' and 'TRADE FOR GEAR' section. It includes images of various cameras and a 'SELL YOUR GEAR' button.

MPB.com

Second-hand camera gear sales are mpb.com's business, so selling through them is slick and easy. You just fill out a form with a few details to get a quote and if you decide to accept it, the next step is to pack up your kit ready for the company's courier to collect it. If the kit is as you described, mpb.com will transfer the money to your bank account shortly after it's received.

The Facebook Marketplace page shows a grid of items for sale, including cameras and lenses. Each listing includes a thumbnail image, the item name, and a price.

Facebook

Facebook's Marketplace lets you sell kit locally and there are no transaction fees. You can upload photos to your listing and write a description with all the important details. Helpfully, Facebook lets you know what price similar items are selling for, to guide your pricing. Once you've posted your listing it will be included in Marketplace searches with the location showing so people know roughly how far they might have to travel to collect it.

'Facebook lets you know what price similar items are selling for, to guide your pricing'

Technique SELLING YOUR GEAR



© PHIL MILTON

Buyers like to know that kit has come from a reputable source, so keep the box and receipt

 This somehow suggests that the camera has been treasured and looked after. If you have the original receipt, that's even better. This not only confirms the camera's age and original price, but more importantly, it also lets the buyer know that it hasn't fallen off the back of a lorry and it's not a grey import. Most buyers like to know that the camera has come from a reputable dealer.

Check the camera or whatever you're selling carefully. Look for any scuffs or marks and make sure you mention them in your advert. Check that everything is in working order. If it isn't, get a quote for it to be fixed and mention this in the advert. Being honest about the condition at this stage can really pay dividends because it makes you more trustworthy. It's far better to be open than to have to deal with a return and risk getting a bad rating that could then affect future sales.

Even if you're selling via the classified ads of your local paper, it's worth taking a few photographs of your kit so you can send them to anyone who enquires about it. If you're selling online, photographs are essential. Make sure that your kit is spotlessly clean and include photographs of any accessories or packaging that's included in the sale. As well as showing potential buyers what they are buying, the photographs can help you make a claim if something is damaged in the post.

It's in the post

If you're going to post the camera to a buyer you need to know how much the postage is going to cost so you can price accordingly. Find a box that will fit everything in and pile all the gear in along with the bubble wrap or whatever you need to keep it safe so you can check

the weight. You'll need this and the dimensions of the box to get a quote from the Post Office or a courier. When it comes to posting the gear, make sure it's well protected and securely taped inside the box. Use a guaranteed delivery service so you can track it and have peace of mind that it's been delivered safely.

AP

The price is right

ONE OF the aspects that people struggle with most when selling their camera gear is settling on the price. Unfortunately, the price that you paid when you bought the camera new isn't relevant; it's all about what the market is prepared to pay now.

One of the best ways to price your kit is to look at what similar items have sold for. The second-hand listings at the back of this magazine make a good starting point, but it's also a nice excuse for browsing in your local camera store. Also take a look at eBay and search for the same or similar gear.

It's important to take into account the condition of the gear you're trying to sell. Someone may be willing to pay £1,300 for a pristine-condition Canon EOS 5D Mark III in its original box, for example, but they'll only be looking to pay around £900 for one that is showing signs of wear and doesn't have a box. As a guide, think about how much you'd like to



© SARAH JONES

Check local camera stores for second-hand prices

get for your kit and what's the lowest you'd be prepared to accept.

You may be able to make a quick sale if you charge a little less than the average rate, but make this clear in your description in case people suspect that there's something wrong with the camera.

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Lefty photographers

I lamented in your letters page, almost five years ago, that viewfinder cameras ignore that we all have noses and most ignore that some of us are left-eyed, and I now appreciate the left-handed problems too.

Being left-eyed, I solved this problem a long time ago for my SLR. I had a zoom lens (about 200mm long and weighing just over a kilogram!) which had a tripod boss on a rotatable ring. I fitted a pistol grip with a cable release to this boss and rotated the camera upside down. The film advance lever was now bottom left but I soon learned to do focusing, metering adjustments and the wind-on with my left hand. This set-up was a significant ergonomic improvement: the camera was braced against my (flat-ish) forehead avoiding my nose and providing a firmer support. Somewhat more subtly, this arrangement meant that the mirror flipped down when triggering the shutter, helped on its way at the vital moment by gravity instead of fighting against it. Of course I could only do this when the zoom was appropriate – otherwise it was squashed nose syndrome.

My early digital cameras had monitors, so my nose was avoided but other problems occurred. Now I have a mirrorless compact system camera with a viewfinder as well, so I am experiencing the nose problems all over again.

Andrew Herbert



Andrew avoids 'squashed nose syndrome' when using his E-M10

Adapt or die

The launch of Nikon's new Z series of full-frame mirrorless cameras seems to have sparked a couple of debates online, with loyal Nikon users bemoaning the introduction of a new mount, and non-Nikon users mocking that decision and the consequent need for adapters. There's even a third debate among Nikon users as to whether they do/don't mind having to use an adapter in the new system.

All of this is nonsense and none of it is new (Sony Alpha 7 series anyone?). A mirrorless camera has had, by definition, the mirror box removed. When mounting a non-mirrorless lens on a mirrorless camera, light no longer converges at the right point, so an adapter is essential to replace the distance formerly taken up by the mirror housing.

Had Nikon retained the F-mount, adapters would still be necessary. Nikon should instead be applauded for engineering a new, wider mount that brings the promise of groundbreaking Z-mount lenses, and producing an adapter that retains AF capability with almost all older F-mount lenses. Perhaps the real debate should see us all ask why Nikon has merely created two mirrorless alternatives to the Alpha 7 series instead of doing something really new, having had four or five years to review developments from the sidelines?

Martin Kimchi

Nostalgia special

This is just a quick note to say how much I enjoyed David Clapp's Chicago trip report (*Chicago on my mind*, AP 8 September). It brought back memories of my old Mamiya C220 TLR, which I used alongside my Olympus OM2 in the days of film. It was a fabulously tactile camera, so much so that I confess to sometimes taking 'photos' with

no film loaded in it just for the physical pleasure of operating the controls.

Unfortunately it was also, as David said, a brick. And, as I mainly take mountain landscapes, that weight eventually sealed its fate and it was sold. But I still hanker after that wonderful mechanism and giant viewfinder.

My old Olympus XA also got a mention in John Wade's piece on rangefinders (*Cool Couples*, AP 8 September). Another nice camera, but polar opposite to the Mamiya. Nostalgia indeed.

Alan Gauld

Travel portraits

I really enjoyed Matt Parry's *People Perfect* article on travel portraiture (AP 18 September). It's my favourite type of photography so I've often been in the kind of situations he described and found his advice very useful. The importance of putting subjects at ease before attempting a shot is, as he says, paramount, and managing to communicate with people without a common language has given me some great experiences on my travels. I'm attaching one of my favourite portraits from a trip to Rajasthan,

LETTER OF THE WEEK



In 1955, Bruce's father took this picture of trench builders hard at work

Trench warfare

Audley Jarvis' review of Canon's EOS 4000D (AP 1 September) included a great shot of a sunset at Porthcothan Beach, North Cornwall. It reminded me of holidaying there in 1955. Each afternoon when Kelly's Ice Cream van appeared at the head of the bay, several families would drive dangerously up the beach to get in the ice cream queue. A group of locals, and some holidaymakers, decided to take the law into their own hands and dug a trench to prevent the cars from going onto the beach at all (see photo). The writer is the wee laddie with the entrenching tool. My Dad took the photo but I don't know the type of camera or film used, only that it was a bellows camera which I later used at the start of my life-long passion for photography.

Like Jacques' seven ages of man, I am now moving from a full DSLR kit to mirrorless and may well end up with that old bellows camera again before too long.

Bruce Macalister

What a great memory. Lucky your Dad had the foresight to take a photo as a reminder – Nigel Atherton, editor

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Chris took this gorgeous portrait in a flash through a car window

India. I took it with my Panasonic Lumix G6 in just a few seconds through a car window! This lovely lady sold me water and when I asked, she was happy for me to take a quick photo.

Chris Dunham (Ms)

Get a (small) grip

I entirely understand that for some purposes – particularly those that need the use of big and heavy telephotos and outdoor locations that can require heavy gloves – a bigger camera body and grip are helpful. But it seems to have become a refrain in every article about CSC models. A review of a Sony laments the size of the grip, and Andy Westlake mentions it in both his *First Look* and *Viewpoint* (AP 1 September).

So let me balance the books. I find EOS 1 bodies and equivalent Nikon kit too big and too heavy for routine use. I don't shoot sport or wildlife, and my usual lenses are between 24mm and 85mm, which match the Alpha 7 bodies really well. I mainly shoot handheld, and in-body IS makes low shutter speeds easily usable.

A varied market is a healthy market. And while it would be no bad thing if the Alpha 9, which is intended for sport and wildlife, grew a big brother with the heft Andy wants, I see no reason for the whole range to alter. It's a bit like saying that a Caterham 7 is no use as a sports car because the seats aren't as big and luxurious as those in a Jaguar (were they so, the car wouldn't have the flicker-light ability that it does).

Very best wishes to all at AP, including Andy, who brings so many great ideas into print every week.

John Duder

© CHRIS DUNHAM

I understand your point about a varied market, but the problem I've found with my Alpha 7 II is that with too many lenses, there's not quite enough space between the barrel and the grip to be completely comfortable, especially if you shoot wearing gloves. The Nikon Z 7 isn't much bigger overall (7mm wider and 5mm taller), and certainly nowhere near EOS 1 size, but manages to include a substantially larger grip, which also includes more space for your fingers besides the lens. So I don't think it needs a huge increase in body size for Sony to improve in this respect – **Andy Westlake, technical editor**

Lightroom fan

I note the ongoing debate about the prevalence of Adobe Lightroom articles in AP and would like to make four points.

First, although a (reasonably contented) Lightroom user, I would very much like to see AP reviewing literally any image-processing software that it can get its hands on, and in depth, too. It is good to inform the readership about what's available – indeed I see this as one of AP's prime functions.

Second, I am a Lightroom user, unperturbed by the monthly subscription at its current level, and perhaps best identifying with Emma Darwin's letter ('Just say... OM', *Inbox*, AP 28 July). Emma started her photographic journey with a basic film camera (an Olympus OM10) and wet darkroom, but then became entangled and bogged down in the intricacies of digital. Finally, she found in an Olympus OM-D E-M10 camera the simplicity of vision she craves – and also found the same in Lightroom, of which she writes: 'Only in Lightroom did I find a program that does what I want with minimum fuss.' I can identify with those words completely.

Third, I am as I say willing to pay the moderate monthly Lightroom subscription that Adobe levies. But should Adobe get greedy, as many companies do, then I would start thinking about non-subscription software.

But last, were Adobe to remove my ability to save my processed files to my PC and demand that all my files be stored in the cloud, I would desert Lightroom instantly.

Adrian Lewis

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Round Eight Travellers' Tales

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Fine art focus

Photographer Reka Nyari is rapidly gaining a reputation worldwide for her striking fine art imagery, often of powerful women. **Steve Fairclough** spoke to her about her career thus far



Inked in Tokyo from
Geisha Ink series
Canon EOS 5D Mark III,
Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8,
1/125sec at f/6.3, ISO 100

ALL IMAGES © REKA NYARI 2018

After growing up in Finland and Hungary – the countries her parents came from – at the tender age of 17 Reka Nyari moved to New York to attend art school and study painting. Following her graduation she admits that it was 'harsh reality time' in New York where high rents necessitated earning a reasonable income. Thanks to her striking looks Reka got picked up by a modelling agency and that then led to her developing a fresh love for photography.

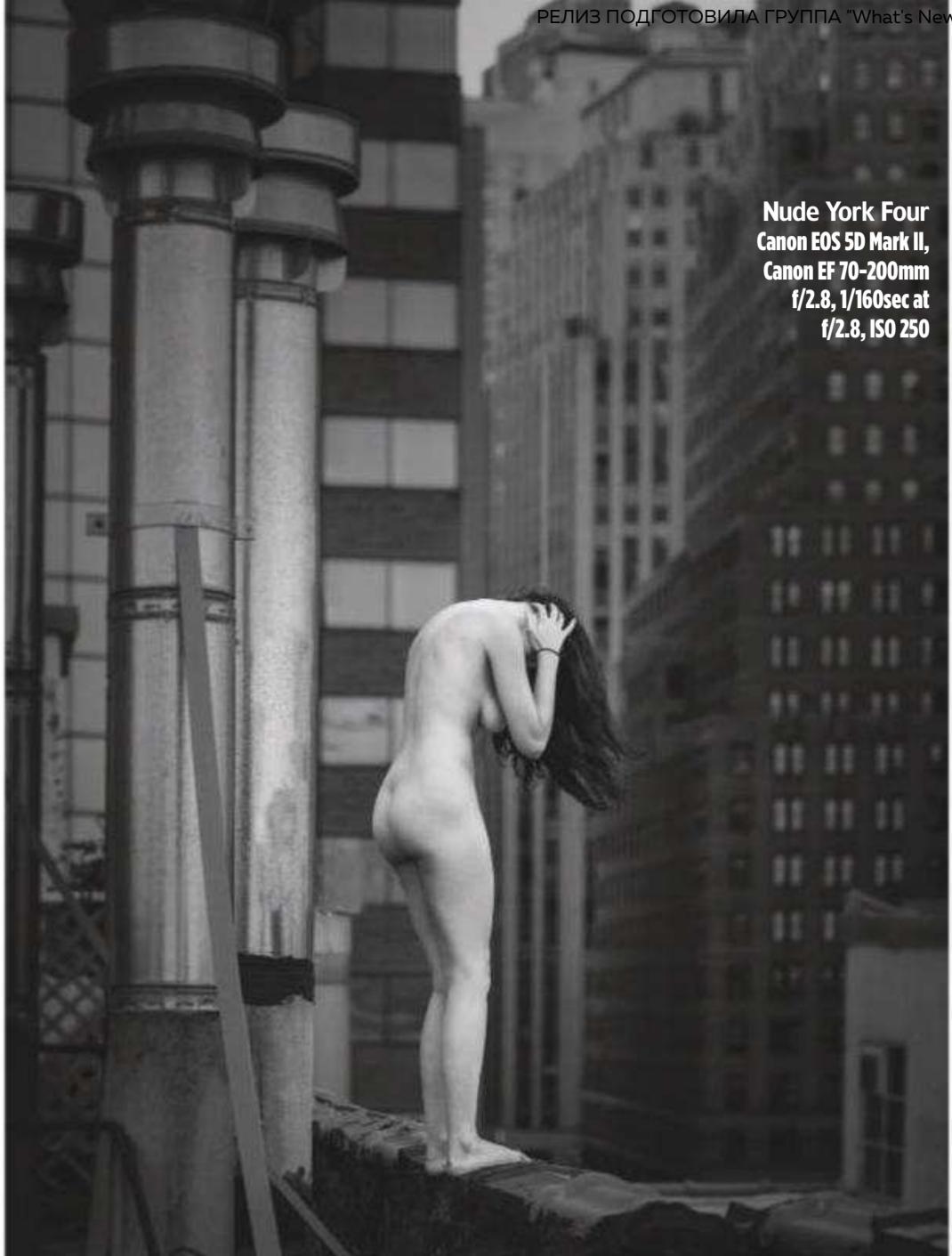
She explains, 'I was travelling all the time. I didn't have my studio or my paintings so I'd take photographs that I thought I'd paint later on. I always loved photography – I was shooting all throughout art school but I just never thought of myself as a photographer; I thought I was a painter.'

On her return from modelling assignments she began shooting self-portraits with a view to painting the results. 'I showed them to a friend and she said, "Why would you paint them? These are amazing; they don't need to be painted." That was like a switch to me, where I thought I could just do photos. The photos are art in themselves; they don't need to be translated into oil paint.'

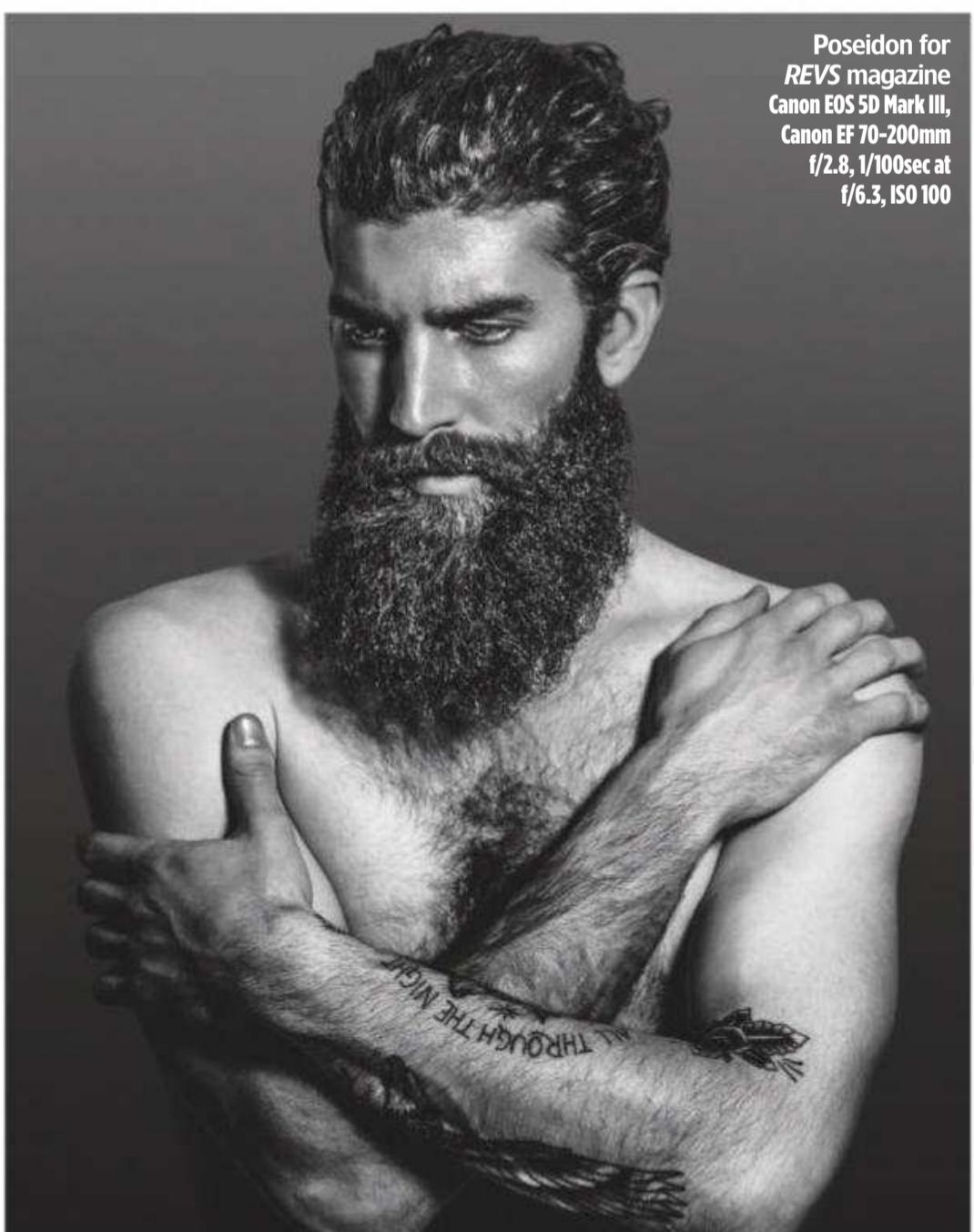
Breaking into the industry

To meet her rent, yet leave her time to pursue creative projects, Reka began waitressing at nightclubs but admits it was a tiring lifestyle. However, the upside was making great contacts and gaining some of her first commissions. She reveals, 'My first clients were people I'd known for years. I told them I was getting into photography and they said, "OK, you're hired for a shoot." It was an amazing opportunity. I was hanging out with models, musicians and artists so it was pretty easy for me to start building my book. I worked in between going out, building my book and learning Photoshop, lighting and studio photography. My first paid client was DC Comics and I was doing campaigns for [watch company] Rado a year after that.'

She adds, 'When I was a painter I always felt it wasn't 100% me because it was so solitary. Once I got into shooting images I just loved the instant gratification, the social aspect, collaborating with creative people on-set – and I've always loved fashion. It was really a great fit for my



Nude York Four
 Canon EOS 5D Mark II,
 Canon EF 70-200mm
 f/2.8, 1/160sec at
 f/2.8, ISO 250



**Poseidon for
 REVs magazine**
 Canon EOS 5D Mark III,
 Canon EF 70-200mm
 f/2.8, 1/100sec at
 f/6.3, ISO 100

'I love to do things that are a bit eerie, edgy, sexy and suggestive with a hint of darkness'

➤ personality; there's nothing else I'd want to do in the world than what I'm doing.'

Inspirations and ideas

Now in her late 30s, Reka is a fan of the work of photographers Cindy Sherman, Helmut Newton and Guy Bourdain but also says she took inspiration from film directors such as Roman Polanski and David Lynch. She reveals, 'I love to do things that are a bit eerie, edgy, sexy and suggestive; things with a hint of darkness. The worst thing when someone looks at my work is if they don't feel anything. If they dislike it it's much better than them saying, "Oh, OK, it's a picture of a face."

Her work often focuses on the nude female form with projects such as Nude York (nudes shot on location across New York City), and her Geisha Ink and Valkyrie Ink projects that document the elaborate tattoos that women have chosen to have inked on their bodies for various reasons. Reka's work spans the fashion, beauty, commercial and fine art genres.

She reveals, 'I think I'm a fine art photographer first and my fine art sentimentality also goes into my fashion [photography]. I'm writing down ideas constantly. My ideas come from life, from people on the street in New York, from movies, from looking at what other artists are doing and not doing, including video, music, fashion and fine art.'

The 'Ink' projects

Her Geisha Ink project is now in a new, self-published, limited-edition book that showcases over 80 of her images, many more than she would usually display at an exhibition. As well as that tome her Valkyrie Ink work featured in exhibitions in New York and Toronto during the first half of 2017.

Reka admits, 'I've always been fascinated by the way our bodies tell stories; even things like scars. I've always wanted to get tattoos but didn't want to make a mistake on my body in case I'd regret it. When meeting very heavily tattooed men or women they had a completely different mindset. It was, "This is the time of my life: this is when I was listening to rock music, this is



Reka Nyari is known for her fine art, fashion, and commercial work. Her images have been exhibited in North America, Asia and Europe and have appeared in numerous magazines. www.rekanyari.com



**Freydis from
Valkyrie Ink series**
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV,
Canon EF 70-200mm
f/2.8, 1/125sec at
f/6.3, ISO 100

when my dog died, this is 30 years ago when I had horrible taste or tribal tattoos were in." It's this really interesting visual patchwork of writing or symbols on a person's body, that tell an obviously visual life story.' She plans to continue her series on tattoos, with a future book clearly in her mind.

Reka manages to combine the sensuality of women with a feeling of empowerment in her images. She explains, 'I like people to see strength in women. I shoot a lot of women who are sexy, nude or edgy but I always feel like I'm shooting

the woman for women. I think it's up to us to choose to show our bodies the way we want to; it's not like being a kind of a sex-object type of situation. If there's anything I'd like people to see in my pictures it's strength and self-control.'

So is it an advantage being a woman shooting nude women? Reka replies, 'I think men have a different advantage because when you're shooting a woman and you're a man – I know this from being a model – it's a different kind of relationship. A lot of times when I'm shooting women, and we have



The new, limited-edition, fine art photo book *Geisha Ink* is self-published by Reka Nyari with an RRP of US\$200. See www.geishainkbook.com.

a good vibe on-set, a woman isn't trying to look stereotypically sexy, posing or anything else. It's more about being naked, being good in your own skin versus that kind of being in a situation with a man where you're trying to look sexy for the opposite sex.'

Cameras and equipment

Reka has been a long-term user of the Canon EOS 5D series of DSLRs and now predominantly shoots with the 5D Mark III and Mark IV. For location shoots she deploys a ProFoto Air lighting kit and maintains a more substantial ProFoto kit in her New York studio. She notes, 'I have a collection of lenses and I would say my 'go-to' [lenses] are the 70-200mm f/2.8 and the 85mm f/1.2. Those two are pretty much on all my shoots.'

She still shoots with film on occasion and plans to branch out more into video. 'I have a videographer I work with. I creative direct it and he does the camera work. There are a lot of shoots in New York where I can bring him in, but when I'm heading to Europe and shooting some things in the summer I won't have him around, so I want to get a Sony body. I'll probably incorporate that in my kit soon and will shoot video with that.'

Fine art focus

Following a 2017 exhibition Reka has been invited back to show her work at the Biennale in Venice, starting in May 2019, so clearly her fine art photography is gaining more recognition. 'I would say I'm 90% fine art and 10% commercial at this time, so it's really taken off,' she notes. 'This year I've had select commercial clients. For example, I'm doing a shoot with human rights activists and *Vogue* is doing a big piece on them. So my commercial work is becoming more intertwined with my human rights and women's rights type of work, rather than just shooting blindly commercial things that don't really relate to my work.'

She ponders, 'I feel like each year I'm growing and there are more interesting opportunities. Every time I'm showing work something else comes out of it. It's not that I'm not interested in shooting the commercial stuff; it just kind of went in this direction. It's been an ideal situation where, instead of selling a product, I'm kind of selling ideas that I find interesting. It's all a bit like a dream come true for me.'

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© DINAH BEATON

Five go down to the seaside

We took five AP readers to Brighton to spend the day shooting with a selection of mystery cameras that had been chosen for them by mpb.com. Read on...



From left to right: Hazel Parreno, Jack Corinthe, Rashieda Van As, Paul Rowlands and Dinah Beaton, at MPB's funky offices

Brighton is home to two piers, the UK's tallest moving observation tower, the country's most eccentric

palace, and Britain's biggest marketplace for used cameras and lenses. We decided to take five AP readers down to the coast to visit all five of them, starting with the last one – mpb.com.

The readers were selected from the large number who responded to the call-out on our website and Facebook page. We asked applicants to tell us what kit they owned, and to list the kind of kit they would like to use for the day. The wish lists we got back were often

pretty extensive, which gave the team at MPB plenty of scope to match each participant with mint condition second-hand items from their vast inventory – while still maintaining an element of surprise as to what they were going to get.

The five intrepid readers arrived at MPB's main offices in Brighton's historic Lanes where they met the MPB team and AP Editor Nigel Atherton. Then they were each presented with the kit they would be using during the challenge, and given a brief orientation on how to use it from MPB's Content Manager, Ian Howarth. Suitably equipped, the group then headed off into the sunshine on their photographic tour of the city.

The participants were given a list of 10 pictures to try to take, which included everything from the Royal Pavilion to 'a seagull'. With a £250 MPB voucher for the reader with the best set of images, there was everything to play for. Find out how they got on over the following pages.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

**Hazel Parreno**

London

Current camera: Sony A7R II
What she was given: Hasselblad X1D,
XCD 45mm lens

I found the Hasselblad challenging at first but once I figured out where everything was, it was easy. I loved how compact and streamlined it is for a medium format camera. It's smaller than a DSLR! Being able to change the focus point on the touchscreen is great too. The image quality is superb. I was impressed by the crispness and the resolution, and by the camera's wide dynamic range and low noise. The lens was great; I loved the bokeh and the resolution is amazing.

I also borrowed a Zeiss 24-70mm f/4 lens for my Sony A7R II because I don't have anything of that focal length. I was thinking about getting the G Master but this one is so much more compact that I might get this one instead. I always assumed used kit would look a bit unloved but both the Hasselblad and the lens were in excellent condition. I would not have known they were second-hand.

**FAVE PICS**

Left: Taken with the Zeiss lens on my Sony, I loved how cinematic this photo came out. It reminded me of a still from a Wes Anderson movie. I tend to think of Brighton as lazy days on the beach and watching the world go by.

Above: This photo, taken on the Hasselblad, really brought home the stunning image quality it produces, with crisp details and punchy colours. The pier is such an iconic part of Brighton and I hope that I was able to capture how it's always a buzzing hive of activity.

**Dinah Beaton**
Hassocks,
SussexCurrent camera:
Canon EOS 70D

What she was given: Canon EOS 5D Mk III with 24-70mm f/4 L IS USM, Canon 45mm TS-E lens (tilt shift)

I was expecting the 5D to be a lot heavier than my 70D but it wasn't. I also found the balance very good with the lens I was using. Being an EOS it felt familiar, though there were a few differences. But with Ian's help, I finally got the settings right and enjoyed using

it tremendously. The camera performed really well but what really shocked me was when I downloaded the pictures. I was stunned to see how incredibly sharp the images were. It's the Holy Grail for me to get my pictures really sharp but I often struggle, and yet with this camera I got the sharpest pictures I've ever had and I got them so easily. I don't know if it was the camera or the lens that made the difference.

The tilt-and-shift lens took some getting used to, and I couldn't really figure out what to use it for but I managed to take some 'interesting' shots. I'm not sure it is for me though.

**FAVE PICS**

The girls on the beach in front of the West Pier. I love the composition and their natural pose. Also the i360 shot I took with the lamp lined up right in front of it.

**Paul Rowlands**
Brighton

Current camera: Sony RX100 Mark IV, Canon EOS 60D

What he was given: Fujifilm X-T2 with 56mm f/1.2 and Fujifilm X100F
It was great to play with the Fujifilm camera and lens combinations. They were both wonderful and I think the X100F will be my next purchase. If you are a street shooter it is a no-brainer.

They were both fantastic for shooting JPEGs. I decided to bracket my shots on both cameras to get three shots of the JPEG film simulations – one as Provia, one as Classic Chrome and one as Velvia. All three produced gorgeous images and, as I don't go in for much boost processing, this was a great way to set them up. I love the generously sized buttons and build quality. Both felt lovely in the hand and the EVFs were superb: very clear, and showing the depth of field as you take the shots. The lens I used on the X-T2 was the 56mm f/1.2 but it was too bright that day to shoot wide open. I noticed how sharp it was though when I got the photo of the 'Queen' in the ice cream van.

On the downside the battery life is



FAVE PIC I can taste summer ... the pebbles under my feet, the sea breeze and I want to sink into that deckchair and relax



Rashieda Van As

Weybridge, Surrey

Current camera:

Olympus PEN F

What she was given: Leica M, Zeiss 50mm f/1.5 C Sonnar T* ZM lens

As a PEN F user I don't like big heavy cameras, so I was thrilled to have a Leica to try out – it was light and comfortable to carry around all day. The one I had was in stunning condition considering that it was

second-hand. It looked perfect. Manual focusing with the rangefinder took some getting used to and it makes you slow down a lot more. It was harder to master but I really enjoyed it. I only wish the day had been longer so I could have practised more. I can't technically articulate what's special about the image quality from this camera but there is something magical about it that I can't put my finger on. The light and colour rendering are just beautiful. I am hooked. If I had the money I would buy one tomorrow.

WINNER



FAVE PIC The 'Queen of ice cream', who was well up for wearing the queen mask

pretty woeful. Even against my Sony RX100s. I managed to fully expire the X100F battery in two and a half hours and the X-T2 was a quarter full when I returned it. I'd need at least three batteries for a day out shooting, I think.

I can see myself moving over to Fujifilm just for the gorgeous colours,

but I will have to save for the X-H1 to shoot 4K for my cinemagraphs.

As for MPB, what a fantastic company. They really looked after us and I could not tell that the cameras they gave me were used examples: they were to all intents and purposes brand spanking new.



Jack Corinthe

Gillingham, Kent

Current camera: Sony A7 III

What he was given: Carl Zeiss Vario-Tessar T* E 16-70mm f/4 ZA OSS and Sony FE 85mm f/1.4 G Master lenses

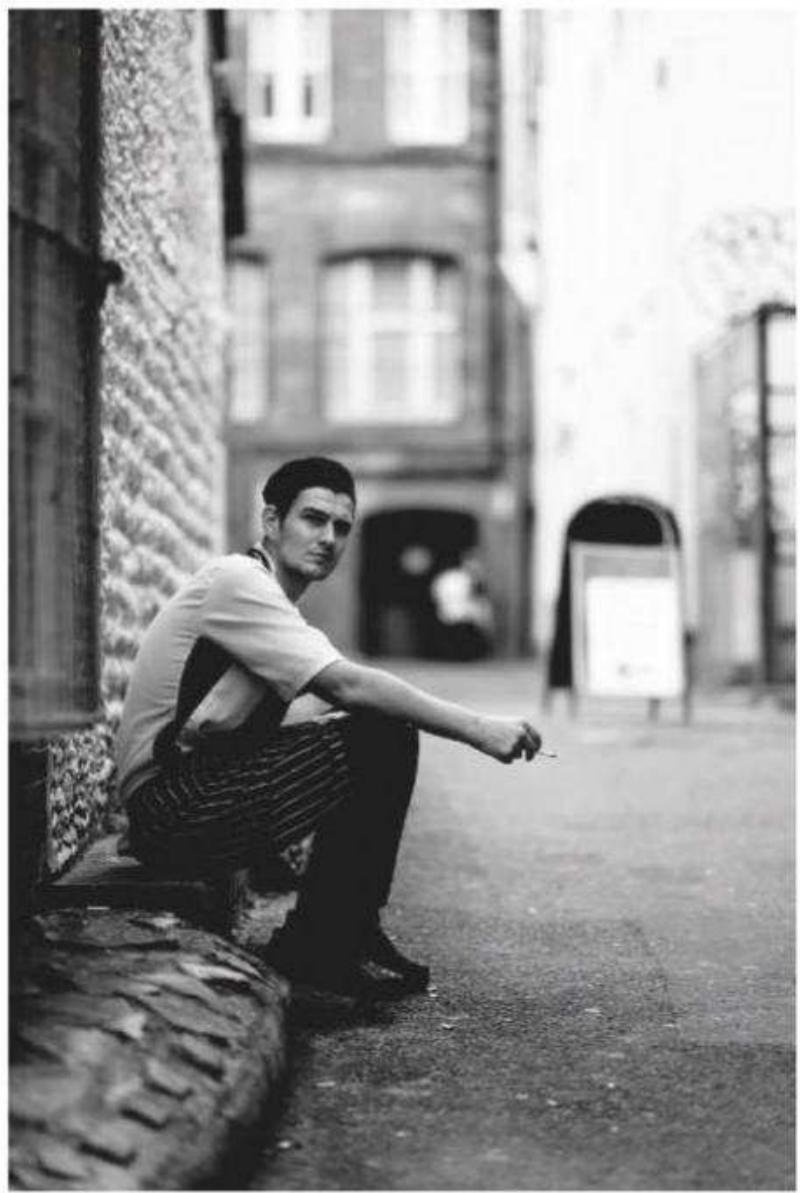
'This shoot gave me the opportunity to use two lenses I hadn't used before with my Alpha 7 III and I have to say they were both fantastic. The 16-70mm was an "everyday" lens, ideal for a location like Brighton, as it gave the flexibility to capture the vast openness of the seafront, while handling the tight lanes with just as much ease. Then there was the 85mm f/1.4 G Master. This lens just blew me away. I have recently started shooting portraits and the creamy bokeh coupled with the tack-sharp G Master glass was the perfect match. I think it's a lens that will be in my kitbag very soon!'

FAVE PICS

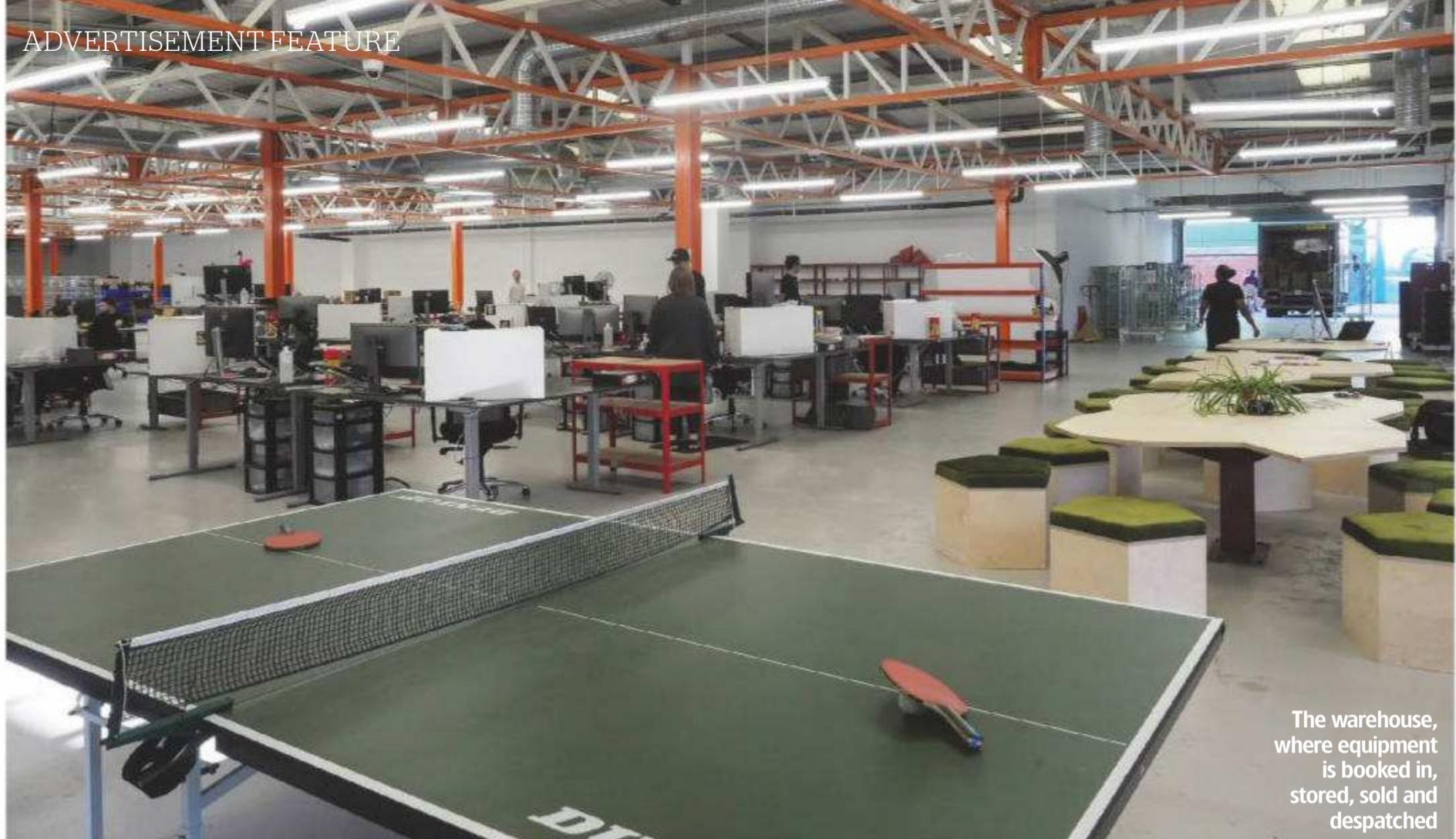
Right: This guy was so happy and willing to have his picture taken that I just knew he was utterly at ease with himself and his environment. I'm not sure whether he was the owner of the coffee shop, but he owned his space and his relaxed, nonchalant stance really made this portrait special for me.



Below: I stumbled across this cook having a breather, with just enough time for a cigarette and to take the weight off. He only glanced at me for a split second, giving me one chance to catch his eye. This captures the side of city life we don't often get a chance to see.



ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE



The warehouse, where equipment is booked in, stored, sold and despatched

Behind the scenes at mpb.com

MPB.com is one of the world's biggest marketplaces for second-hand cameras, lenses and accessories, with a huge online inventory of equipment. Based in Brighton, the company has expanded rapidly since being founded 10 years ago by Matt Barker. With over 80 staff, MPB now has an office in New York to manage its US operations, and recently moved into the German market.

Our Photo Challenge started and ended at MPB's stylish head office in the Lanes, where specially commissioned murals by local artists adorn the walls, and a variety of dogs wander over to say hello while their owners are busy at their computers.

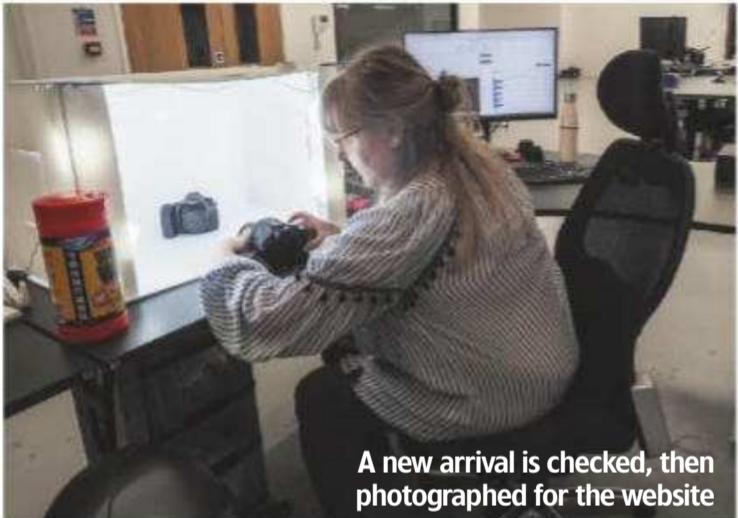


Sold items are placed on the delivery lorries from the loading bay

But we also visited the company's vast 18,240sq ft warehouse on the edge of the city to see how they handle such a huge turnover of kit. As equipment comes in it is checked, photographed, catalogued and added to the inventory. When the kit is sold, the delivery lorries reverse right up to the loading bay to collect it. It's a well-run operation but it doesn't feel like a factory, with its bespoke, locally made furniture and, yes, more friendly dogs. Most of the staff are photography enthusiasts and the company is currently installing a traditional photographic darkroom for their use.

MPB is proud of its customer service and is rated five-stars on TrustPilot. Its website is one of the most user-friendly in the industry, both for buyers and sellers, and the company is so confident of the quality of its used stock that it offers a six-month warranty as standard.

If you're looking to buy or sell any gear, you are welcome to visit the warehouse by appointment, which offers a customer waiting room with a glass wall where you can see the staff at work. Alternatively, visit their website at www.mpb.com.



A new arrival is checked, then photographed for the website



Recently purchased items are taken to the stockroom

WHAT'S HOT AT MPB

So what is the most in-demand kit at MPB right now? Here's a list of the cameras and lenses they just can't get enough of:

- Canon 5D III
- Canon 5D IV
- Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8 L IS II USM lens
- Canon EF 24-105mm f/4 L IS USM lens
- Fujifilm X-T2
- Fujifilm XF 50-140mm f/2.8 LM OIS WR lens
- Nikon D810
- Nikon D500
- Nikon AF-S 24-70mm f/2.8G IF-ED lens
- Nikon AF-S 70-200mm f/2.8G IF-ED VR II lens
- Sony A7R II
- Sony FE 24-70mm f/2.8 GM lens



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One of Them is a Human #1

By Maija Tammi

Maija Tammi's prize-winning portrait of an android called into question just what it is to be human. **Amy Davies** analyses this

This portrait of 'Erica' was one of the most controversial subjects of 2017's Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize, especially so when it picked up a top-three award. Finnish photographer Maija Tammi was also awarded the 2017 John Kobal New Work Award.

The reason for the consternation was the fact that Erica is not, in fact, a human, but an android. She is designed to be lifelike, complete with voice recognition so she can have (limited) conversations with humans.

Shortlisting the portrait, never mind awarding it third place, appears to be at odds with the contest rules. In a statement to the BBC, the competition organisers said, 'The gallery has decided not to disqualify this portrait though accepts it is in breach of the rules. There are occasions when particularly compelling portraits raise interesting questions about the genre of portraiture, and these [images] may be included at the judges' discretion.'

One such rule is: 'All photographs must have been taken by the entrant from life.' For now we might not associate the term 'life' with androids, but that meaning may change in the years to come.

There was talk of altering the rules for future competitions, but at the time of writing, the rules appear to be unchanged.

Disclosure

With her accompanying written submission, Tammi disclosed the fact that her subject was not human, but the judges are only able to see the image and its title during the initial judging process.

In an interview with *The New York Times*, Laura McKechnie from the National Portrait Gallery said, 'It was felt that the subject of this portrait, while not human, is a representation of a human figure and makes a powerful statement as a work of art in its questioning of what it is to be alive or human and asks challenging questions about portraiture. The ambiguity of this portrait makes it particularly compelling.'

Maija Tammi often works with scientists for her projects, which according to her website, include the topics of 'disgust and fascination, science and aesthetics'. Her background is in photojournalism, but she has turned to artistic projects in recent years. 'One of Them is a Human #1' comes from a conceptual work that includes four portraits – three of them are androids and one of them is a 'plausible human'. It's up to us as viewers to decide which is which.

The image was shot while Tammi was studying for a PhD in Japan. Speaking to the *Evening Standard*, she said, 'I am researching representations of sickness in art photography, and when you look at sickness it's

defined in relation to life and death. 'There are X amounts of different definitions for human death: there's biological death, clinical death and so on. It's not so simple. So I wanted to look at the life part. What is being alive?'

To explore this theory, she visited Hiroshi Ishiguro Laboratories in Osaka, taking photos of the androids in isolation – as opposed to with a human model – in order to create a sense of ambiguity. 'Erica' was not switched on during the shoot, which lasted around half an hour, but Tammi was able to control the pose via a laptop.

Tammi told the *Evening Standard*, '[It] was so slow, because with a human, you can say, "Please look at that corner over there, just twist your chin a bit," and everything goes accordingly. But for the robot, you need to move everything one by one.'

It's clear if you look at the other androids in this series, why 'Erica' is the standout model. She is an idealised form of what it is to be human, and was created as part of JST Erato – a science project which has received a huge amount of funding. She has been dubbed 'the most beautiful and intelligent android ever'. Professor Hiroshi Ishiguro told the *South China Morning Post*, 'I used images of 30 beautiful women, mixed up their features and used the average for each to design the nose, eyes, and so on. That means she should appeal to everyone.'

Not everyone agrees with that conclusion, though. Photography critic Sean O'Hagan wrote in *The Guardian*, 'Erica, alas, looks too synthetic and soulless to convince me that this is a great portrait.'

Either way, this image has certainly provoked debate around both what it is to be human, and indeed, what defines the portraiture genre.

To see more of Maija Tammi's work, including the rest of 'One of Them is a Human', visit majatammi.com. Head to npg.org.uk for more on the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2018, the winners of which will be announced soon.

ONE OF THEM IS A HUMAN #1 BY MAJJA TAMMI (ERATO SHI GURU Symbotic HUMAN-ROBOT INTERACT ON PROJECT) © MAJJA TAMMI



Maija Tammi's portrait of
'Erica' took third place in
the Taylor Wessing
Photographic Portrait
Prize 2017



Enter by 28 September 2018 at www.theiet.org/photo-competition #IETPhotoComp



Daniel took this striking image of Portsmouth Harbour with a second-hand Russian FED 3

© DANIEL STONEMAN

Daniel Stoneman

All of my cameras are second-hand and they have all been found in different places. They included my father's old Canon T70 from the first era of computerised SLRs (sold as 'digital cameras' in the '80s), a 1917 Box Brownie from a thrift shop, a gorgeous '70s Russian FED 3 rangefinder from a second-hand camera shop (see sample image on left) and a Japanese TLR – the last that Yashica made.



I'm not interested in museum pieces, but cameras I can use – ones that take high-quality images, which these days can be cheaply scanned in and edited in the same way as digital photographs. Perhaps my biggest bargain over the years has been a Zenit TTL in perfect working order, bought from the tip with a lens and flash for only £15! It had the original case and manual, along with annotations from the previous owner. I like to think it was an elderly person who had it from new and loved it for decades, and recorded lots of memories. For this price, no one should be afraid of taking a punt on a lonely old camera. The rolls of film cost less than £3 and developing can be done for around £2.50, making the entire endeavour a much cheaper entry into photography than other options. It's also a great way to learn about photography, and build a collection of excellent old lenses, all of which can be adapted for digital bodies too.

Readers' second-

What pre-loved cameras, lenses and accessories have AP readers managed to snaffle? Here are seven stand-out examples

© RICHARD PATTERSON

Richard bagged this bokeh-tastic spring image with his E-PL3, only £85 from MPB



Kim finds using two OM10 bodies is ideal for creative double exposures with film

Kim Von Coels

I used to do a lot of film photography, particularly travel, but my camera bag was stolen when I was in South America. As I like to experiment with film and do double exposures and light painting (see www.thekrumbleempire.com), I looked on eBay for Olympus SLRs as I was familiar with the system. I was pleased how much choice there was, and picked up an OM10 with the 50mm f/1.8 kit lens for £38, including a case and postage. To make multiple exposures with film easier, I subsequently bought another OM10 body, for a similar price, along with a 24mm lens for a still reasonable £100: the 50mm lens is great for close-ups of flowers or patterns, while the 28mm is great for landscapes and people in the landscape. I can then merge the images. In addition, I buy prism lenses off eBay, which you can pick up for between £6 and £30, and use these on the OM10s with cheap Chinese adapters. If you shop around you can get Olympus OM10 bodies for £20 – I

© KIM VON COELS



can't get a roll of film developed for that. I actually find focusing manually with the OM10 easier than using the AF on my Nikon DSLR (probably because I shoot a lot at night). I do use the manual adapter, however, as I don't want to have to think about 'everything' when taking pictures of models.



hand bargains

Janice Day

I was looking for a cheap 'take anywhere' camera for travel and family outings and heard the Panasonic Lumix GF1 was a good second-hand buy. I wasn't wrong as I managed to pick one up with a basic but still very usable 14-45mm kit lens for only £100 off Gumtree – and that price included two SD cards, plus original box and battery, from the owner, who'd had it from new. The camera looks and feels great and although it's only got 12 megapixels, I can still get decent prints from it. There are lots of controls on the camera, which I prefer, rather than everything being menu or touchscreen-based, and as it's Micro Four Thirds, there is a fantastic range of lenses to choose from, new or second-hand. If you use a pancake lens on the GF1, it's a wonderfully compact camera system, and you can record high-quality video too. Yes, there are downsides in such an old camera, such as higher noise levels as you push the ISO, but if you are aware of the GF1's limitations, it's a great second-hand buy for around £100.



© JANICE DAY

For Janice, the Panasonic GF1 is ideal for candid shots

Testbench

YOUR SECOND-HAND BARGAINS

Johnny Wilson

When I started getting more seriously into photography I began scouring eBay for a second-hand film SLR. I didn't really know much, I just wanted one that looked nice. I eventually settled on the Olympus OM10, which I managed to get for only £10 plus postage, along with the original 50mm f/1.8 kit lens. It's been going strong for well over 10 years now and I've added a manual adapter and a second 28mm f/3.5 lens. It's still my favourite camera because it's not too large and cumbersome and I can take it everywhere. I've put colour, black & white, slide and red-scale film through it, and coupled with the original 50mm lens it takes outstanding shots with a certain charm you only get with 35mm film photography. There are no downsides for that money. My other great bargains include a Vivitar Ultra Wide and Slim – a cult plastic 35mm film camera – for £3 from a charity shop (see sample photo, above right), and a boxed, brand new BeLomo Vilia Type 3 – a Belarussian rangefinder from the early '80s – for a fiver from a camera fair. It's so simple to use but has an amazing pin-sharp 40mm lens.



Johnny took this beautifully toned image with a £3 Vivitar compact



Steve loves all kind of wildlife, including mice, and finds that the D3 is a great-value solution



© STEVE THOMAS

Steve Thomas

I picked up a Nikon D3, as a second camera for taking camera-trap shots, for £360 (body only and no charger) from Park Cameras. It was a good price and Park offers excellent customer service, by the way. My interest is wildlife, so I like the high ISO performance, frame rate and robustness. I've used a D3 in the rain, snow, cold (not so much heat) and it copes well. I also like the controls – I almost never use the menu when out in the field



as I can do everything from external buttons and switches, and I know exactly what it's going to do. Battery life is great as I rarely need to change batteries for a full-day's shooting. The only downside is that the shutter is noisier than I'd like. It's very hard not to disturb animals, especially prey animals which are sensitive to anything untoward in their environment. And it's big and heavy. Autofocus is good but clearly more modern cameras are better... I wish I could justify a D5.

John's second-hand D5500 had only 700 shutter activations



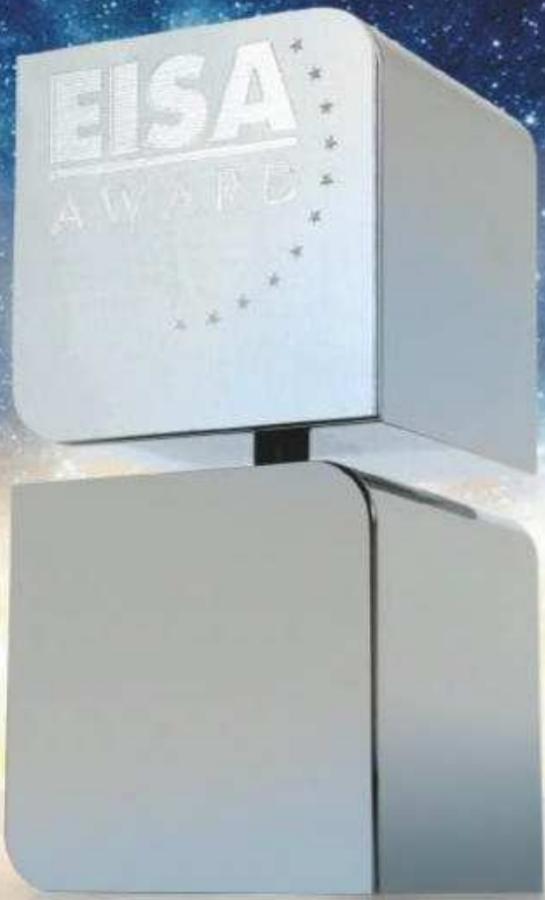
© JOHN HEYWOOD

John Heywood

In my local camera store, I was looking for an affordable DSLR with good ISO performance, and chanced upon a Nikon D5500 with just over 700 shutter activations. The dealer let me have it for £450 body only. The D5500 is fantastic for documentary and environmental portraits as well as studio work. I also use it for wildlife, landscapes and flowers, as well as video. There is no noise up to ISO 1600 and the HDR is incredible. Together with the Nikkor 18-300mm it is all I need and the pop-up flash and articulated screen are also really handy. I started as a professional photographer in the Royal Air Force in 1966 and have been a professional most of my working life using manual cameras with film. Even the Nikon D5500 is science fiction compared to the gear I had as a pro! The only downsides to the camera are not being able to use high speed flash and the lack of weatherproofing.



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Hobby diving to
catch dragonflies
Nikon D800, 600mm,
1/2500sec at f/5.6, ISO 1000

ALL PICTURES © OSCAR DEWHURST

Hobbies use the same
perches to scan for prey
Nikon D800, 600mm,
1/1600sec at f/6.3, ISO 1000



WILDLIFE WATCH

Hobbies

Hobbies are agile and extremely quick birds of prey. Photographing them is tricky and takes practice, but the results are very rewarding, as **Oscar Dewhurst** reveals

Hobbies are elegant birds of prey, with slate-grey upper parts, heavy black streaking on buff underparts and chestnut-coloured thighs and vent. The crown is the same colour as the upper parts, and on the face, a dark 'moustache' contrasts with pale cheeks and throat, and yellow facial skin. Roughly the same size as a kestrel, the long, pointed wings give the impression of a giant swift. They are extremely quick, which allows them to hunt prey such as dragonflies and birds like swallows and martins in mid-flight, which are often consumed on the wing. You can see them in this country from April, when they arrive in the UK from Africa, until October, when they return. Breeding is late, between the end of May and August, which coincides with an abundance of dragonflies and fledgling birds with which to feed the young.

They occupy relatively open areas with some trees, such as pastures, cultivation or scrub with scattered trees or copses, and are often seen near rivers and wetlands, where their prey can be found. Late summer and early autumn is a good time to photograph them as the young birds are learning to hunt for themselves. The abundance of prey such as dragonflies and young swallows and martins around wetland areas means these are often good places to look, and birds will often hunt for sustained periods, circling at height before diving downwards in pursuit of their target prey.

Note that hobbies are a Schedule 1 species, so if photographing them during the breeding season, extreme care must be taken to ensure you are not causing disturbance.

KIT LIST

► Tripod and gimbal head

Hobbies fly extremely quickly, so a stable tripod and gimbal head make following them in flight easier and reduces movement that would result in losing focus on the bird.



► Binoculars

I always carry my Swarovski binoculars with me whenever I'm out photographing, as they are invaluable for finding my subject, as well as for watching other wildlife I might see.



Oscar Dewhurst

is an award-winning wildlife photographer from London. Currently studying a Master's degree in Biology at Durham university, he has photographed a wide range of subjects, ranging from urban foxes and bitterns to rainforest wildlife in the Peruvian Amazon. [www.oscardewhurst.com](http://oscardewhurst.com)



Shooting advice

Hobbies will often use the same perches to scan for prey. For the best chances, find where the birds hunt, as this may give you repeated opportunities to photograph them – I say repeated opportunities, as you are likely to need them, given how quickly the birds fly and how agile they are in the air. Have a look at bird sightings pages for your area. I've had success photographing hobbies hunting dragonflies, as they will often come very low over the water in a (relatively) straight line, giving you a better chance to track them.

Photographing hobbies requires shutter speeds of at least 1/1000sec. Increase your ISO accordingly, as a sharp noisy photo is usually better than a clean blurry one. Continuous autofocus is essential, as is your fastest frame rate, particularly if you are hoping to capture them with talons outstretched as they move in for the kill. I use single spot autofocus, as this gives me the best success rate of having the focus where I want it. If the background is clear and distant (e.g. the sky), using more points can be beneficial. If the light is changing I tend to use aperture priority or manual mode if it's constant. Take an exposure reading off a neutral colour, and check how it looks on the LCD screen, before dialling it in.

A fast frame rate is essential for capturing quick movements
Nikon D800, 600mm, 1/1600sec at f/6.3, ISO 1000



Hobbies come very low over the water for dragonflies
Nikon D800, 600mm, 1/4000sec at f/4, ISO 1250



About the hobbies

Hobbies resemble a giant swift, with their long, pointed wings and rapid, agile flight. This makes them a challenge to capture in sharp focus.

- **Location** Hobbies breed across most of England and Wales, excluding the more northern areas.

- **Size** Length 28-36cm, wingspan 70-92cm.

- **Nest** Nests almost always in trees (often pines); uses unoccupied corvid or raptor nests or grey squirrel dreys.

- **Diet** Mainly flying insects such as dragonflies and moths, and small birds, particularly fledglings of species such as swallows and martins.

- **Population** 2,800 UK breeding pairs.

Testbench SECOND-HAND LENSES



Bargain hunt

Always thought of buying a used lens but couldn't quite make the decision? **Audley Jarvis** considers the pros and cons of buying lenses second-hand, and recommends some favourites

The second-hand lens market provides a great way to upgrade and expand your lens collection without having to pay top dollar. The savings on offer can be pretty considerable too. For example, buying a brand-new Nikkor 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6G ED VR telephoto zoom in its box won't give you much change from £2,500. A second-hand example of exactly the same lens in near-mint condition, however, can be yours for as little as £1,300, saving you over £1,000 – enough for another lens perhaps.

Of course buying second-hand isn't entirely risk-free, so it pays to know what to look out for before handing over any cash. Buying from a specialist second-hand camera shop significantly decreases the risk of being ripped off, but comes at a higher cost than buying privately. Buying privately, on the other hand, is usually the cheapest way to obtain a pre-owned lens, albeit with a degree of added risk.

If you decide to buy via a camera specialist, then our advice is to stick with a reputable firm. This includes companies such as Wex Photo Video, Camera World, Park Cameras, Grays of Westminster, Camera Jungle, MPB and the London Camera Exchange. Specialists like these will generally offer a guarantee on all their second-hand lens stock – usually for a period of three to six months, although some offer up to 12 months. You can often choose to extend your warranty, but it will obviously cost you extra. Be sure to check your chosen retailer's warranty and returns policy in advance of your purchase, and clarify anything you are unsure of before committing to buy.

If you decide to buy privately, you would want to check over the lens in person before handing over any cash. While minor cosmetic scratches to the outer body shouldn't put you off, look for more serious signs of misuse, poor storage and drops. This might include things

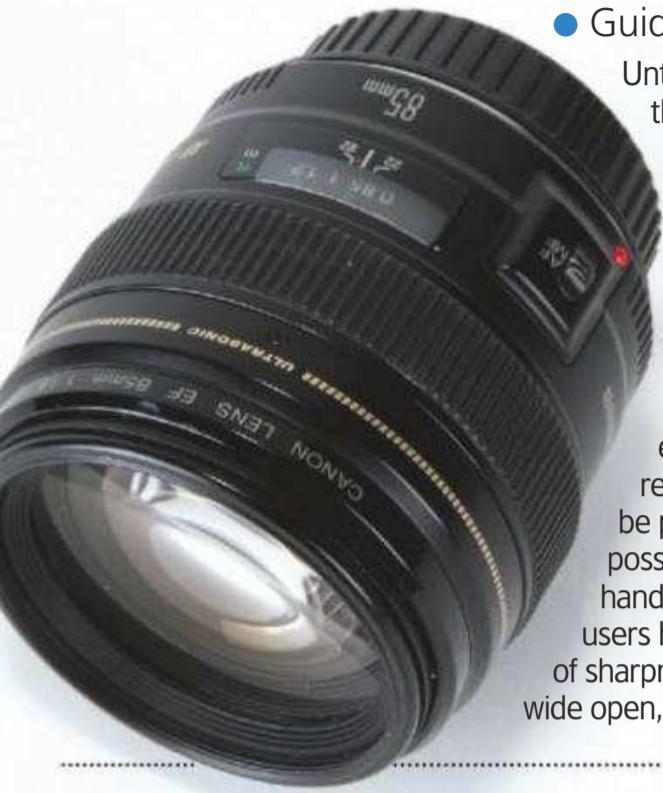
like dents to the front filter or excessive wear to the lens mount – something that cheaper lenses with plastic mounts are particularly susceptible to. Find out whether the lens has been fitted with a protective filter, and pay close attention to the front and rear elements to ensure they are not scratched. If it's a zoom lens be sure to check the resistance of the zoom ring too, to make sure it's not overly loose and susceptible to lens creep.

Given the nature of buying online over distance, physical inspections aren't always possible, in which case you'll have to rely on the integrity of the seller to a degree. If you are purchasing from a website with a seller rating system in place (for example, eBay) then be sure to check the seller's previous feedback and prepare a list of questions to ask them. Be wary of any sellers that use generic product images as opposed to photos of the actual lens they are selling. Honest sellers will generally list any defects in the item description; however less honest sellers rely on being deliberately vague in the hope you won't ask any awkward questions until they have your money and it's too late. Just be sensible about things: so long as you employ a bit of common sense and remain on your guard you should be absolutely fine.

Canon EF 85mm f/1.8 USM

● Guide price £200-250

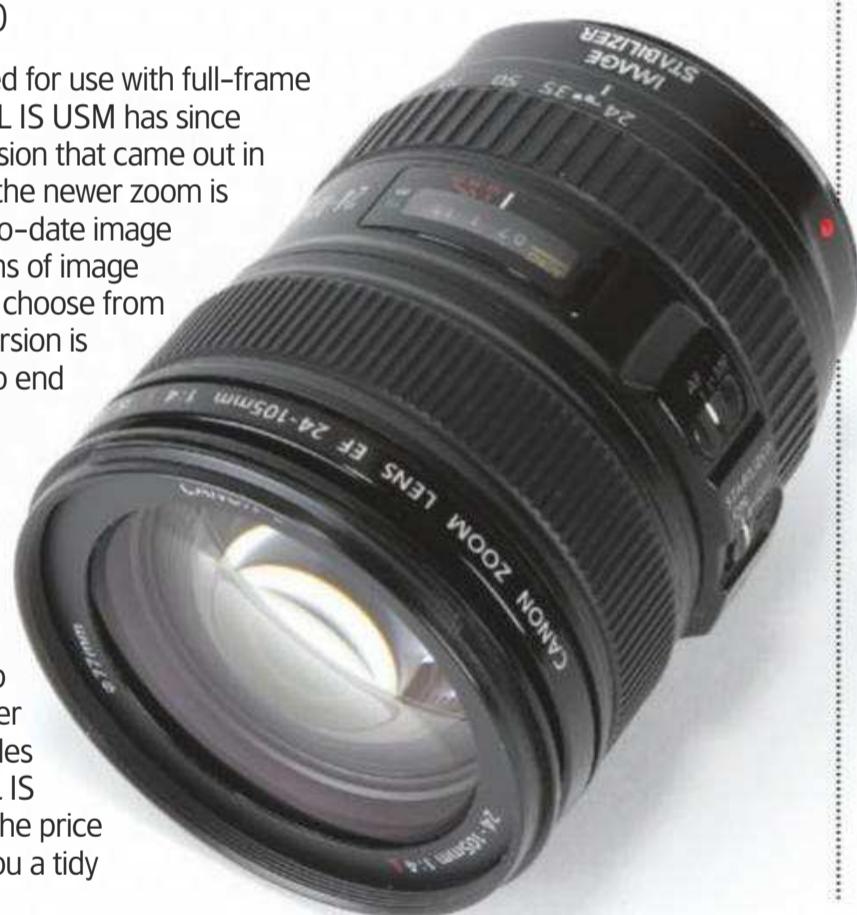
Until recently Canon offered two 85mm primes: the professional-grade EF 85mm f/1.2L (£1,730) and the more affordable EF 85mm f/1.8 USM. These have recently been joined by the 85mm f/1.4L IS USM (£1,380) which brings image stabilisation to the table. While the EF 85mm f/1.8 USM lacks the 'L' designation of its more expensive peers it remains a fantastically capable lens that produces dreamy bokeh, making it especially well suited to portraiture. Originally released in 1992, the EF 85mm f/1.8 can still be purchased new for around £415, but it's possible to source a well-looked after second-hand model for around half this price. While some users have noted that the 85mm f/1.8 can lack a bit of sharpness in the centre of the frame when used wide open, stopping down to f/2 or f/2.8 quickly fixes this.



Canon EF 24-105mm f/4L IS USM

● Guide price £380-420

Released in 2005 and designed for use with full-frame DSLRs, the EF 24-105mm f/4L IS USM has since been succeeded by an IS II version that came out in 2016. The main advantage of the newer zoom is that it benefits from more up-to-date image stabilisation technology. In terms of image quality, though, there is little to choose from between the two; the newer version is slightly sharper at the telephoto end and also produces images with slightly less distortion and vignetting. In everyday real-world use, however, the differences are minimal, with the original 24-105mm f/4L remaining a highly versatile lens that's capable of pin-sharp results at all focal lengths. Better still, good second-hand examples of the original 24-105mm f/4L IS are available for less than half the price of the newer version, netting you a tidy saving of around £600.



Canon EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS USM

● Guide price £450-730

Introduced in 1998 the Canon EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS USM established itself as a staple lens for professional wildlife and sports photographers thanks to its combination of optical excellence and tank-like build quality. In 2016 Canon released its successor: the EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS II USM. While the newer zoom brings an all-new optical design and numerous upgrades to the table, they come at around a £1,400 premium. If that's too much for your wallet to bear, then rest assured that the original 100-400mm is more than capable a performer. Constructed from 17 elements in 14 groups, the design includes the use of fluorite and Super UD-glass elements for greater control over chromatic aberrations, and while the lens's built-in IS technology is a little dated compared to modern examples, it still offers up to two stops of shutter speed compensation. Externally, the lens features a push-pull zoom control with friction adjustment, and is partially weather sealed. For Canon users looking for a longer telephoto zoom on a budget the 100-400mm is hard to beat.

Nikon Micro-Nikkor AF-S 105mm f/2.8 G VR IF ED

● Guide price £360-500

Released in 2006 and still available to buy new for around £849, the 105mm f/2.8 G VR IF-ED is a medium telephoto prime lens designed for macro enthusiasts. To this end it can be used to capture super-sharp life-sized images when set to its minimum focus distance of 31cm. Nikon's own Vibration Reduction image stabilisation technology enables the lens to compensate for up to four stops of shutter speed at distances of three metres or more. Optically constructed from 14 elements in 12 groups, the lens benefits from an extra low-dispersion (ED) element to combat chromatic aberrations along with Nikon's Nano Crystal coating to reduce flare. While the 105mm f/2.8 G VR IF-ED is primarily offered as a macro lens, it's also a useful portrait lens when mounted on a full-frame camera. If you're a Nikon user looking to get into macro photography on a budget then seeking out a decent second-hand example will not only secure you a great lens, but also save you a lot of money in the process.



Testbench SECOND-HAND LENSES



Nikon Nikkor AF-S 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR DX

● Guide price £250-450

Released in 2008, the 18-85mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR AF-S DX is a standard zoom for everyday use that offers the 35mm focal length equivalent of 24-127.5mm when mounted on a Nikon APS-C DSLR. This gives it a bit of extra wideangle spread over the standard 18-55mm kit zooms, as well as quite a bit of extra telephoto reach for more faraway subjects. Internally, the lens is constructed from 17 elements in 11 groups, including two ED glass elements and three aspherical elements. In terms of features, the lens employs a Silent Wave motor for fast, accurate and super-quiet focusing, while Nikon's second-generation VR image stabilisation technology provides up to four stops of shutter speed compensation. A decent 16-85mm second-hand example can be picked up for around £250, making it an ideal upgrade for those who find their 18-55mm kit zoom a bit restrictive.

Nikon Nikkor AF-S 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6G ED VR

● Guide price £900-1,500

Released in 2013 the AF-S 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6G ED VR updates Nikon's original 80-400mm zoom that came out in 2001. Designed primarily for use with full-frame DSLRs, the 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6G ED VR benefits from numerous improvements over the old zoom, most notably a Silent Wave motor that greatly speeds up focus performance (a notable bugbear of the original 80-400mm) while providing instant manual override. Nikon's VR technology is also on hand, providing up to four stops of shutter speed compensation for handheld shooting at slower shutter speeds. Internally, the lens is constructed from 20 elements in 12 groups including one Super ED and four ED glass elements, along with Nikon's anti-flare Nano Crystal coating. Externally, there are separate controls for MF/AF mode, VR on/off, VR mode (Normal/Active), a focus limiter (Full or infinity-8m), and a locking mechanism that locks the lens at its smallest length for safe transport. For sports and wildlife enthusiasts looking for a versatile telephoto zoom, the 80-400mm is undoubtedly a great lens. Better still, it's possible to save well over £1,000 by hunting down a decent second-hand example.



Sigma 30mm f/1.4 EX DC HSM

● Guide price £150-360

In early 2013 it was replaced by an all-new model in Sigma's 'Art' line, but the original 30mm f/1.4 is still a very fine lens. It uses a hypersonic motor for silent autofocus, with full-time manual override available at any time. As usual for Sigma's EX lenses, build quality is very good, and the lens is available for all SLR systems. The 30mm is the only third-party fast 'normal' prime for APS-C

SLRs, offering a 45mm equivalent angle of view. This gives a very natural perspective for everyday shooting, and the fast aperture is ideal for low-light and shallow depth-of-field shooting.



Tokina SD 12-24mm f/4 (IF) DX AT-X Pro

● Guide price £150-250

Tokina's 12-24mm f/4 was one of the earliest wideangle zooms for APS-C DSLRs, and offers an 18-36mm equivalent angle of view (19-38mm on Canon SLRs). It's an extremely solidly made lens that features a focus clutch mechanism, whereby pulling the focus ring towards the camera engages manual mode. Nikon owners should note that only the later 'II' version has a built-in autofocus motor. Tokina has a strong reputation for making wideangle zooms, and the 12-24mm is impressively sharp at all settings. Its main weakness is quite strong chromatic aberration that's visible across much of the frame, but can be substantially removed in post-processing.



Sigma 17-70mm f/2.8-4.5 DC Macro

● Guide price £120-180

If you're looking for a more versatile replacement for an 18-55mm kit zoom, the Sigma

17-70mm f/2.8-4.5 DC may just be the ticket. With a useful 26-105mm equivalent zoom range, the lens offers an unusually fast maximum aperture for its type. The minimum focusing distance is just 20cm through the entire zoom range, allowing close-up shooting.

Current prices make this lens an absolute bargain.

A later iteration of this lens adds image stabilisation and a built-in hypersonic autofocus motor for even greater versatility, but obviously this comes at a higher price. Both models are available in all SLR mounts.



'With a useful 26-105mm equivalent zoom range, the lens offers an unusually fast maximum aperture for its type'

Sigma 105mm f/2.8 EX DG Macro

● Guide price £150-210

Now replaced with an optically stabilised version, the older Sigma 105mm f/2.8 macro lens is still one of the best macro lenses that you can buy, and one that we have used in the AP studio to test cameras for a number of years.

The Sigma 105mm f/2.8 EX DG Macro consists of 11 elements in 10 groups, and its 460g body has a solid feel. Its minimum focusing distance of 31cm provides a true 1:1 macro magnification, and a good working distance for any budding macro photographer. While the optical stabilisation of the new lens is useful, and at £330 it is really good value, if you get lucky you can find the previous 105mm f/2.8

Macro lens for as little as half that price. In our tests we've found that at the aperture settings most commonly used for macro images, there is very little difference in sharpness between the old and new Sigma 105mm f/2.8 macro lenses.



Tamron SP AF 17-50mm f/2.8 XR Di II LD Aspherical (IF)

● Guide price £110-150

Tamron's classic fast normal zoom has now been replaced by an image-stabilised version (at least in Canon and Nikon mounts), but it's still a great choice for APS-C SLR owners looking for high-quality optics. The fast maximum aperture makes it especially useful for indoor shooting or when there is low light. The 17-50mm f/2.8 was always a popular lens, and this means it's in plentiful supply on the second-hand market, which in turn helps to keep prices low. Nikon users should note that old models of the lens don't have a built-in autofocus motor, which was added only in the 2008 version (model A16NII).



Testbench **SECOND-HAND LENSES**

Tamron 18-270mm f/3.5-6.3 Di II VC PZD

● Guide price £150-200

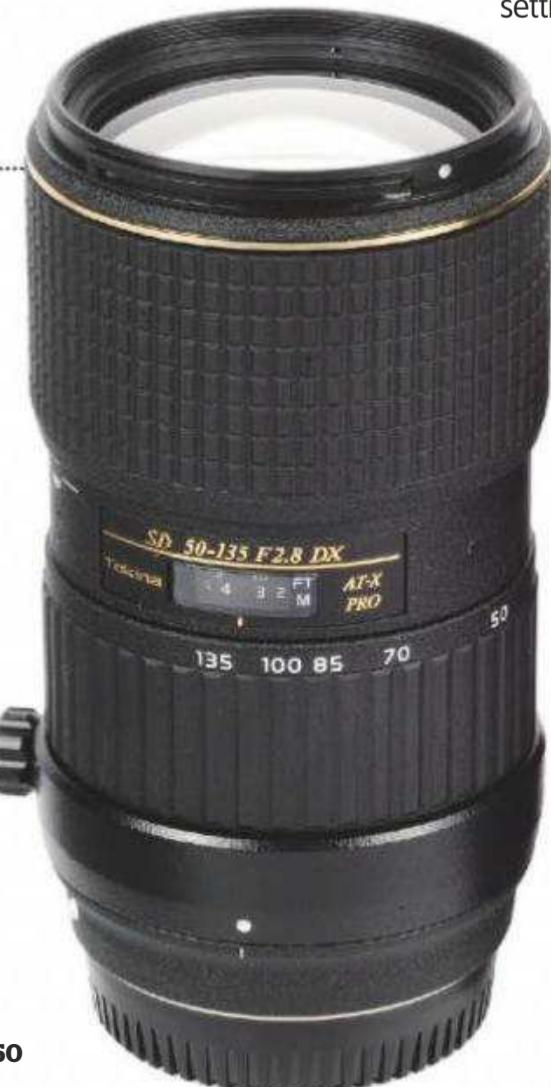
Although superzoom lenses can receive negative press for being Jacks of all trades but masters of none, this shouldn't really be the case. While the image quality may not be able to match a shorter zoom, and definitely won't be as good as a fixed focal length lens, the convenience of having one tucked in your camera bag makes them ideal for travelling. With an impressive 15x zoom, the Tamron 18-270mm f/3.5-6.3 Di II VC PZD is designed for APS-C sensor DSLR cameras, giving the equivalent of a 27-400mm on full frame. With such a huge range, it can cover the vast majority of images that you would wish to take. Tamron's Vibration Control IS is particularly impressive, and is needed when shooting at telephoto settings. For a general-purpose all-round lens, it's a good and affordable option, particularly for travelling.



Sigma 12-24mm f/4-5.6 EX DG HSM

● Guide price £270-350

When it was launched, the Sigma 12-24mm f/4.5-5.6 had the distinction of being the widest rectilinear zoom lens ever made for full-frame cameras. It also offers a useful 18-36mm equivalent range on APS-C cameras, which makes it particularly attractive to photographers who use both formats, and a built-in HSM motor offers silent autofocus. However at a hefty 600g in weight, it's quite a bit bulkier than wideangle zooms specifically designed for the smaller sensor size. The 12-24mm has since been replaced with an all-new 'II' version that includes updated optics to reduce distortion and chromatic aberration. Both models have built-in non-removable lens hoods to protect their bulbous front elements.



Tokina AT-X Pro 50-135mm f/2.8 DX

● Guide price £190-320

The 50-135mm f/2.8 DX is a fast telephoto zoom for SLRs with APS-C sensors, and offers a 75-200mm equivalent range. Like the similar Sigma 50-150mm f/2.8 EX DC HSM, it was designed to complement a fast normal zoom of the 16-50mm type, giving a much more portable alternative to a 70-200mm f/2.8 zoom. It combines good image quality with Tokina's usual bombproof build, and was made in Canon and Nikon mounts, with the latter lacking a built-in focus motor. The Pentax DA 50-135mm f/2.8 SDM is essentially the same design. Perhaps surprisingly this type of lens never really took off, despite its attractions, with photographers still preferring to buy 70-200mm optics. This means it's relatively scarce on the used market, and prices are still quite strong.

"The first "DG" update added coatings on the rear element ... and the 2006 "Macro" version reduced the minimum focusing distance to 1m"

Sigma 70-200mm f/2.8 EX DG Macro HSM

● Guide price £300-350

Before its current image-stabilised model, Sigma made a long line of 70-200mm f/2.8 lenses, with four iterations starting from the first 1999 design. The first 'DG' update added coatings on the rear element for use with DSLRs, and the 2006 'Macro' version reduced the minimum focusing distance to 1m. A revised 2007 'HSM II' model featured improved optics. All of these lenses are available on the second-hand market, with the most recent model not surprisingly commanding the highest prices. The slightly older 'Macro' model represents good value, at around the £350 mark in good condition.



Sigma APO 50-500mm f/4.5-6.3 EX DG OS HSM

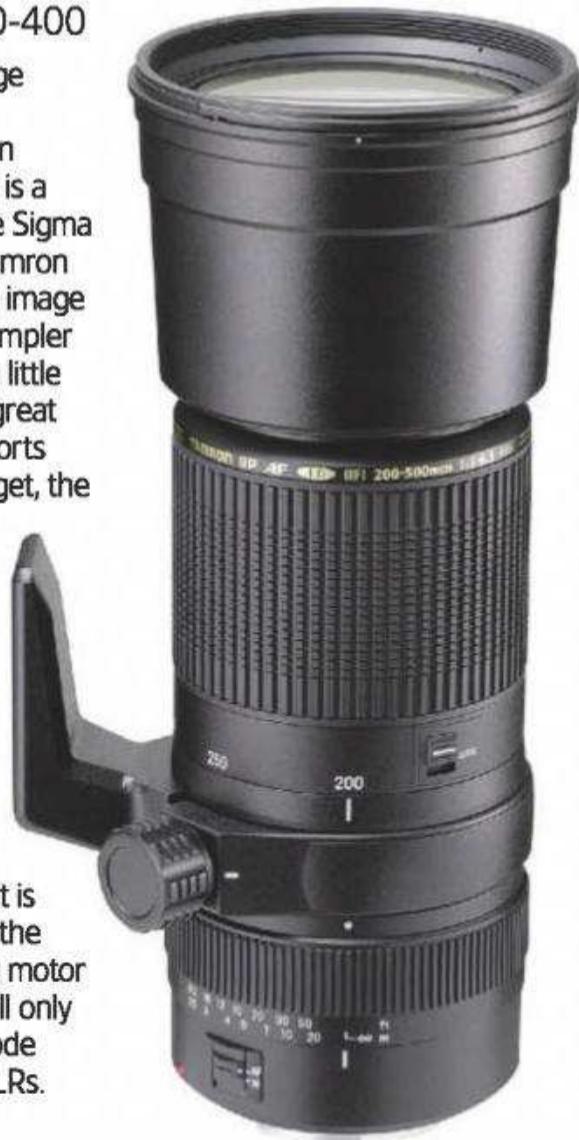
● Guide price £300-500

Now replaced with an optically stabilised version, the original Sigma 50-500mm f/4.5-6.3 lens is a favourite among wildlife photographers. Like a superzoom lens, the 10x zoom lens may not produce images that can match the sharpness of a 300mm or a 70-200mm lens. But what it does provide is a lens that can cover most focal lengths that wildlife and sports photographers will want, especially if it is used on a DSLR with an APS-C format sensor. With 20 elements in 16 groups, and weighing a hefty 1.84kg, the lens has rightly earned the nickname 'The Bigma', and it has attained cult status among enthusiast wildlife photographers. Although the later version with optical stabilisation has obvious advantages, the original version can be found at bargain prices; however demand for the different Sigma, Nikon, Canon, Sony and Pentax mounts means that prices can vary quite a lot.

Tamron 200-500mm f/4.5-6.3 SP AF Di (IF)

● Guide price £250-400

If you don't fancy the huge range of the Sigma 50-500mm lens, the Tamron 200-500mm f/4.5-6.3 is a good alternative. Like the Sigma 50-500mm lens, the Tamron 200-500mm lens lacks image stabilisation, though its simpler design means it weighs a little less at 1.24kg. Another great choice for wildlife and sports photographers on a budget, the Tamron 200-500mm lens is available in Canon EF, Nikon F and Sony mounts. Although the lens is designed for full-frame sensors, it will obviously work on cameras with APS-C sensors, where it offers the equivalent of a 350-750mm lens. It is worth noting that due to the lack of a built-in focusing motor in the Nikon version, it will only work in manual focus mode on entry-level Nikon DSLRs.



Tamron SP AF 90mm f/2.8 Di Macro

● Guide price £180-250

Another lens that has now been updated with optical stabilisation is Tamron's 90mm f/2.8 Macro. However, the older Di version (Model 272E) is still considered something of a classic. In the Di version the lens is a redesign of the classic 90mm macro lens produced by Tamron, featuring new optical coating to make the lens produce sharper images with digital camera sensors. With excellent image sharpness and the equivalent field of view of 145mm on a DSLR with APS-C sensor, it is one of the best macro lenses you can buy, and is available at a bargain price second-hand.



© LONDON CAMERA EXCHANGE
Shop around and you can pick up some great deals on second-hand equipment from many photography outlets

Used & approved

Michael Topham speaks to second-hand stockists to find out more about their most interesting used kit and their view on the market as a whole

The second-hand photography market shares many similarities with the used sector of the automotive industry. Just like car dealerships sell used and approved cars on their forecourts, many camera retailers sell

second-hand stock via their stores and websites to customers who'd like to own a particular camera or lens for less than it was originally sold for new. Again, much like buying a car, there are used stockists who deal exclusively with one manufacturer, those

who specialise in classic and vintage models, and dealers who buy and sell a variety of stock in high volume to cater for all types of customers.

One of the main concerns when buying anything second-hand is not knowing how the product was

cared for in its previous life. Like buying a used car from a reputable dealership, the benefit of buying a second-hand camera or lens from a retailer or trustworthy used stockist is that you get a warranty and the reassurance that what you are buying has been carefully inspected and tested. You'll also find there's usually a returns period, where if you're not entirely happy with what you've purchased, you can return it within a certain number of days and get your money back – something you don't get when buying an item on the spot when it's bought as seen.

Here at *Amateur Photographer* we have an excellent relationship with many of the retailers and second-hand stockists in the industry, so to find out more about the current trends in the second-hand market and the interesting sales they've made over the years, we asked them a few questions, to which we received some very interesting answers.

Grays of Westminster

● www.graysofwestminster.co.uk ● 020 7828 4925

Why do many photographers choose to buy second-hand as opposed to new?

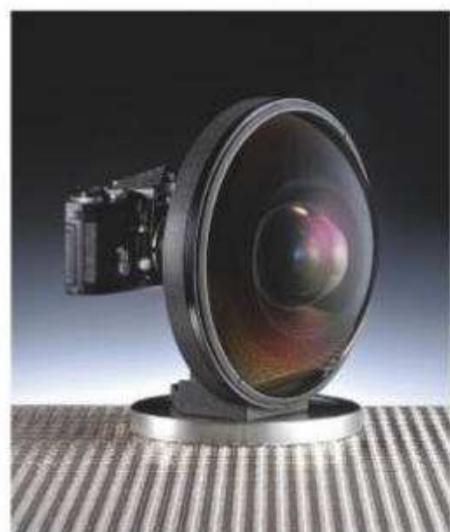
There's the price consideration, but some people prefer to have a camera or lens that has proven itself over time. We sold a Nikon D5 that had belonged to Manuel Harlan. Knowing that it belonged to Stanley Kubrick's nephew meant that he cherished it all the more. There's also the fact that we offer a minimum 12-month guarantee and 14-day returns period on all our second-hand kit.

What's the most interesting second-hand item that you've stocked?

The very rare Fisheye-Nikkor 6mm f/2.8 caused an internet sensation since its acquisition and subsequent sale by Grays of Westminster. Nikon stunned the photographic world at Photokina in 1970 by introducing this 220° Fisheye-Nikkor with an astonishing speed of f/2.8. It is the world's most extreme wideangle lens to cover the 24x36mm image area and is for scientific and industrial applications and special effects when shooting portraits, architecture and interiors, etc. We sold it for £100,000 in 2012.

How important is it to stock rare second-hand equipment?

It's very important to us to be able to display and sell exceptional items made by Nikon. In the early days of their 35mm rangefinder cameras, lenses and accessories were very eye-catching and colourful as were the instruction



The rare Fisheye-Nikkor 6mm f/2.8 was sold for £100,000 in 2012

What's the most popular used lens at Grays of Westminster?
Currently in the AF-S section it's the Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8E VR and Nikkor 70-200mm f/2.8 (VR II and FL versions). In manual focus lenses it's the Micro-Nikkor 55mm f/2.8 and the incredibly popular Nikkor 105mm f/2.5.

manual and advertising. These make for attractive displays and people visit us from all over the world and want to see the rare and unusual. We have catered for collectors since our inception in 1985. We often locate the rare and unusual for a client and the item is never shown in the shop as it is delivered to the buyer or buyer's agent. We have recently delivered a number of items to an overseas client who has probably spent in excess of half a million pounds on his collection.

What do people tend to bring in to sell? What do they then go on to buy?

More often than not people are upgrading from older versions of a camera or lens in order to purchase a newer version. We do come across photographers who are downsizing their kit, but the reverse is also true in that some photographers are starting to look at a professional career and will sell their starter kit to upgrade to something better. When new models are released we often see an influx of the previous model.

Where does the future of Nikon second-hand equipment stand now that a full-frame mirrorless camera has been released?

I'm sure that the market will continue to thrive, as many photographers won't want to give up their DSLRs. Resolution is a factor too, as there are many who won't want the extra file sizes for the type of work they are doing. Thanks to the inclusion of an adapter for Nikon SLR lenses there will be many photographers still wanting to invest in SLR glass, particularly as these can then be used on both DSLRs and the new mirrorless system.



There's an excellent space dedicated to used stock at the Burgess Hill store

Park Cameras

● www.parkcameras.com ● 01444 237070

How long has the company been dealing with second-hand stock?

Park Cameras has been selling pre-owned equipment since the company was founded in 1971 (47 years back). However, we've seen our largest growth in this area over the past two years.

What's the main reason for people to choose second-hand as opposed to new?

Generally we've found it's because customers want to get a great product at a lower price, helping them to expand their equipment in a shorter period of time compared to purchasing the same item new. Thus they make their money go further.

Why has there been a surge in second-hand camera/lens stockists in recent years?

We believe it's because the biggest photographic brands are currently bringing out new models at a faster rate than before, and as such, customers are choosing to upgrade on a more frequent basis. This is largely because of new technologies advancing faster. As a new and used stockist, we are able to offer additional benefits such as Trade-in bonuses and part-exchanges for those upgrading to new products, meaning that customers also tend to upgrade more often.

What is your most interesting second-hand item?

It's difficult to choose, as we have a large variety of interesting

products. However, we've recently had a Mamiya 7 II medium format body come in. It's a great camera that can be used in a variety of situations, either to shoot landscapes, studio work or even candid street photography shots owing to its bright viewfinder and quiet shutter.

How profitable is the second-hand market for a camera retailer?

The second-hand market can be marginally more profitable than selling new items, but this is more high-risk because we cover the warranty as opposed to a new product where the manufacturer would. There is a lot more work involved, unlike new items that we can just book in and put on the shelf. Used items go through a thorough process of multi-point testing, cleaning, shutter counts, photographing and repacking, and are individually assessed, fully described and prepared for sale. We also check that accessories are not missing. Many items we sell are unique or rare, but we feel we not only offer fair prices when buying in items, but also sell them at a fair price to the end user.

What would you say is the current trend in the second-hand market?

We've found that many customers like the benefits that a full-frame sensor provides and thus we are generally seeing a switch in that direction – especially as full-frame cameras are becoming more affordable all the time.

London Camera Exchange

● www.lcegroup.co.uk ● 0207 379 0200

How long has LCE been dealing with used equipment?

London Camera Exchange has been dealing in used gear for over 50 years since opening in Guildford in 1954.



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What's the main reason people choose second-hand over new?

The reason is down to value for money. The savings often give them the opportunity to own a higher-spec camera than they could afford to buy new or they can build a decent used kit quicker with the extra money they've saved.

Which are more popular: used cameras or used lenses?

Used cameras and lenses seem to sell in equal measure. We sell a lot of used accessories such as flashguns and battery grips too.

What is your most interesting second-hand item at present?

We recently had a mint boxed example of Sony's Cyber-shot RX1R II – a sensational full-frame compact with a 42MP resolution, coupled with a Zeiss 35mm f/2 lens and built-in EVF. It's ideal for those who need high-resolution images without the bulk of a DSLR, and recently sold for £2,199. We also have a mint example of a used Nikon D850 body that has a shutter count of just 1,000 shots.

What are the advantages to selling kit to LCE as opposed to selling online?

The advantage to selling to LCE is an instant decision, with no waiting around for a potential buyer to arrive or dispute an item



LCE lists a selection of Leica cameras and lenses for sale on its website

LCE provides a friendly service from all of its 30 stores across the UK

that has been sent to them. You can call into your local store or fill out the online purchasing tool on our website and we'll arrange a collection. It's as simple as that.

What principles does LCE's second-hand service run on?

Our main goal when offering used gear for sale is to offer a good deal compared to buying new. Also, if the gear offered to us is in such condition that we wouldn't personally buy it ourselves, we won't take it in.

Is there any gear you have too much of and struggle to sell?

Slow sellers are typically the early DSLRs. They can be an ideal starter's outfit though and a camera costing £500 a few years ago now may only fetch £100 today.

Does the relatively short life cycle of today's cameras make second-hand equipment more appealing?

The rate of progress with new camera technology means you can pick up a very well-specified, recent DSLR for a considerable saving on its new equivalent. We see a lot of mint/little-used pro and prosumer bodies that offer very good value for a reasonable outlay.

Camera Jungle

● www.camerajungle.co.uk ● 0330 808 3324

What volume of second-hand stock does Camera Jungle deal with?

The Camera Jungle website regularly lists between 1,500 and 2,000 items. There are hundreds of new items being added every week, with direct purchases from customers and trade-ins from 57 Jessops branches.



A Nikon D810A costs about £2,000 in excellent second-hand condition

What are the advantages to selling kit to a stockist as opposed to selling online through eBay, etc.?

First, our website will give you an instant price, so you know exactly how much you will receive. Second, we will collect the item from you free of charge, so you don't have any postage costs. Third, we will deposit the money straight into your bank account by BACS transfer, so you will get the money quickly. And finally, you can pick up the phone and speak to a member of staff when in any doubt.

What is your most interesting second-hand item?

One of the most relevant products currently is a Nikon D810A DSLR camera. This camera has been designed specifically for astrophotography and with the recent lunar eclipse and blood moon, together with Mars currently being in close proximity to Earth, it is particularly nice to have something made for purpose. This camera has a specifically designed IR cut filter, to capture the red tones of H-alpha emission nebulae, but with no optical low pass filter so you get exceptional detail. It will also shoot extra-long exposures, up to 900 seconds and it has a built-in time lapse and interval-shooting facility. It will shoot unlimited continuous JPEG images for fantastic star trail images spanning the entire sky. It is the perfect tool for high-quality and versatile astrophotography.

What is the most popular selling used camera?

Our most popular model currently is the Canon EOS 5D

Mark III. This mid-to-high-end DSLR is a favourite of both enthusiasts and professionals. It has always been a popular camera that produces consistently good results and a used one offers excellent value for money. Other manufacturers have similar models, like the Nikon D750 or the Sony A7 range, but for us the Canon is the leader.

What are the main principles that Camera Jungle's second-hand service runs on?

We pride ourselves on stocking fully functional, professionally cleaned used cameras and lenses which are supplied with all the accessories you need to start using it. For added peace of mind, we offer a 12-month warranty with all our stock. We offer DSLRs and lenses for everyone, from an absolute beginner to a professional, as well as compact cameras and mirrorless cameras.

Each camera and lens is fully inspected, tested and cleaned by our technicians prior to appearing on the website and we show high-resolution photographs from various angles, of the actual item, to give the customer an almost hands-on look at the product. We understand that with buying a technical piece of equipment there can also be a large financial outlay so we have a friendly and knowledgeable customer service team, who can give help and advice throughout the process. To make sure customers are happy and can buy with confidence, we offer a 14-day, no-quibble returns policy.

MPB

• www.mpb.com
• 0330 808 3271

For how long has MPB been dealing with second-hand stock?

We've been going since 2011. Our CEO started buying and selling lenses on eBay in his spare time while at university and MPB was born.

Why should people look to sell and buy through MPB?

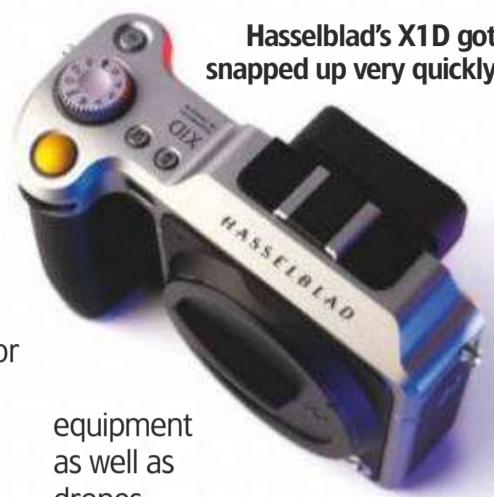
There are various downsides when buying and selling through other platforms. The sale is never guaranteed to complete and the process can be time consuming and expensive when factoring in fees when using platforms such as eBay. We provide a trusted end-to-end service, which allows both buyers and sellers to avoid facing hassle and fees. We offer market-leading quotes for sellers and extremely competitive prices for buyers.

If you're selling your gear with mpb.com, you can fill out a form,

which only takes a minute, and receive your instant quote. If you choose to accept it, you will have completed the sale and have funds in your bank account within three working days. To avoid the hassle of posting kit, we offer free courier collection on a convenient day for the seller too. Our service is commitment-free, meaning you can change your mind at any point in the process before payment is made and we will return the equipment free of charge. For buyers, we provide a detailed description on the website for each and every item, plus a six-month warranty and super-fast delivery.

What is the most interesting second-hand item MPB has stocked?

We got hold of a Canon 1200mm lens back in 2014. That was on the website for £99,000 and weighed around 16.5kg! It didn't sell unfortunately, but it was fun for us to try out, being one of about only 20 in existence. We also regularly buy and sell some incredible RED digital cinema



Hasselblad's X1D got snapped up very quickly

© MPB

equipment as well as drones.

Which products are snapped up most quickly when they appear on the second-hand market?

Anything that's recently been released and sold to us gets snapped up pretty quickly. We have seen this happen with the Nikon D850 (the first time we got one of these in, it lasted on the website for only a few hours).

Some other items that have sold fast are the Sony Alpha 9, Canon EOS-1D X Mark II, Hasselblad's mirrorless X1D camera and a rare find – the Canon 50mm f/1.0 lens. We always recommend that people check the website regularly.

Mr Cad

• www.mrcad.co.uk • 020 8684 8282

How is Mr Cad different from other second-hand stockists?

We believe we are different from many other retailers as we have a large range of equipment in a very small space – all things from 35mm, medium and large format cameras to lenses, tripods and enlargers, as well as all items for the darkroom, studio lighting to 35mm rangefinder and compact cameras and more.

What is your current most interesting second-hand item?

There are so many to mention. We have a Nikon S2 rangefinder camera with 5cm f/1.4 lens, a copy of the Zeiss Ikon Contax camera and a Wisner Wooden 5x4 in fantastic condition, which is unusual to see. We also have a Leica M4-2 Gold and a Sinar P 12x10, of which only two were ever made. The only difficulty with the latter is that 12x10 film can be

difficult to locate. Many of the items we stock are rare and unusual, but are still very usable, giving customers a chance to own a bit of history as well as allowing them to enjoy their hobby.

What items do you sell most of at Mr Cad?

We sell film by the thousands as well as offer all the developing and processing for Black & White, Colour Reversal or Colour Negative. Any film we sell (35mm, 120mm, 127mm and 5x4) we can develop and process. As part of the team that was involved in the start up of Impossible, we stock Polaroid Originals film as well as Fuji Instax. We keep and sell a lot of Black & White and Colour 10x8 film.

Are there any products you're famous for selling?

Everything and anything analogue



© MRCAD

Mr Cad specialises in all things analogue and are London based

that customers cannot find or locate elsewhere.

What would you say are the current trends in the second-hand market?

Young customers as well as older customers coming back to film. We also get customers from the Far East who never had film and want to use it for the first time. We see many fashion and portrait photographers returning to film. It allows you to be more creative, plus it forces you to get the shot right in camera. There's a lot to be said for freeing up time spent on the computer and Photoshop.

Wex Photo Video

• www.wexphotovideo.com • 01603 486413

What's your quickest-selling used camera right now?

It's difficult to say, but the Canon EOS 5D Mark III is a true workhorse and it continues to be a popular second-hand choice.

Why has there been a surge in used camera stockists in recent years?

Digital camera technology has reached the point where older cameras still offer excellent images, but at a lower cost. In the early days of digital, change was so rapid that used cameras were often unwanted.

What is your most interesting second-hand item stocked currently?

The Nikon D500. It's one of the best DSLRs Nikon has made, and not common second-hand. A perfect fit for sports and wildlife, but it gets overlooked for general-purpose shooting, and overshadowed by mirrorless cameras. It's beautifully built, has a wonderful viewfinder and is extremely fast.

Which used products are snapped up most quickly?

We have a lot of demand for good glass. Fujifilm is making some wonderful lenses and they're usually quick sellers.

What are the current trends?

It's very much a mix. DSLRs have a big advantage in lens choice, and there's a lot of really robust, weathersealed cameras at a good price. The mirrorless market is much more fickle, but it's still early days.

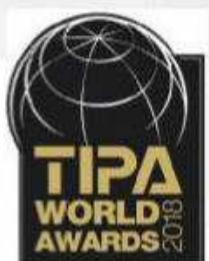


All used kit is thoroughly checked over before it's listed for sale

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* Always check with your airline as cabin allowances may vary and are subject to change.



VANGUARD



@VanguardPhotoUK

www.vanguardworld.co.uk

STOCKED BY ALL GOOD QUALITY RETAILERS

Manfrotto Noreg Backpack 30

Michael Topham tests a modular backpack

● £159 ● www.manfrotto.co.uk

THERE'S a lot to be said for making sure your camera bag meets your requirements. Choose one too small with not enough space for daily essentials and you'll be forced to leave items behind. Choose one too big and you'll be left not knowing what to fill it with. Manfrotto's Noreg 30 is designed for those who'd like a versatile backpack suitable for accommodating a medium-sized DSLR or mirrorless camera with a couple of lenses, while offering a convenient space above the camera compartment for clothes, food or other items you might like to take with you on a day trip.

The upside of the bag is that it's modular and consists of two detachable parts that can be used separately. The internal camera compartment can be removed and used as a small shoulder bag when you only want to carry your camera and lenses. There's also a well-cushioned 15in laptop compartment at the rear that can be unzipped and used as a stand-alone laptop sleeve. If you don't require the camera compartment or laptop sleeve, both can be removed and left behind, allowing it to be used like any conventional backpack.

Manfrotto have thought the bag through very well. It has a tripod holder and large pocket on the front, two zipped pockets on the inside that are perfect for thin accessories like filters or memory cards, and it's supplied with a rain cover. The shoulder straps, back of the laptop compartment and rear of the bag are well padded and although it lacks a waist strap, it does have an elasticated sternum strap to keep the shoulder straps in place. The materials, stitching and overall finish is first-class, with the red pulls to the external zippers offering quick entry to both the lower and upper sections of the bag.

The bag was tested on a weekend trip and offered sufficient space for a premium mirrorless camera, a 70-200mm f/4 lens and additional 24-70mm f/4 zoom. My only criticism is that the shoulder strap for the pull-out camera compartment doesn't come supplied with an anti-slip shoulder pad – something I'd want to add.

Verdict

If you're not one for lumping around vast amounts of photo kit and want a backpack that gives you the flexibility to carry daily essentials while out walking or exploring, the Noreg 30 makes a very valid choice. It's essentially two bags in one, and the luxury of the modular system gives you the option to customise it for whatever you have planned. All in all, a very versatile backpack with dedicated camera storage.



At a glance

- Airline carry-on friendly
- Tripod connection
- 1,620g
- 29x14x46cm (internal dimensions)
- 29x18x47cm (external dimensions)



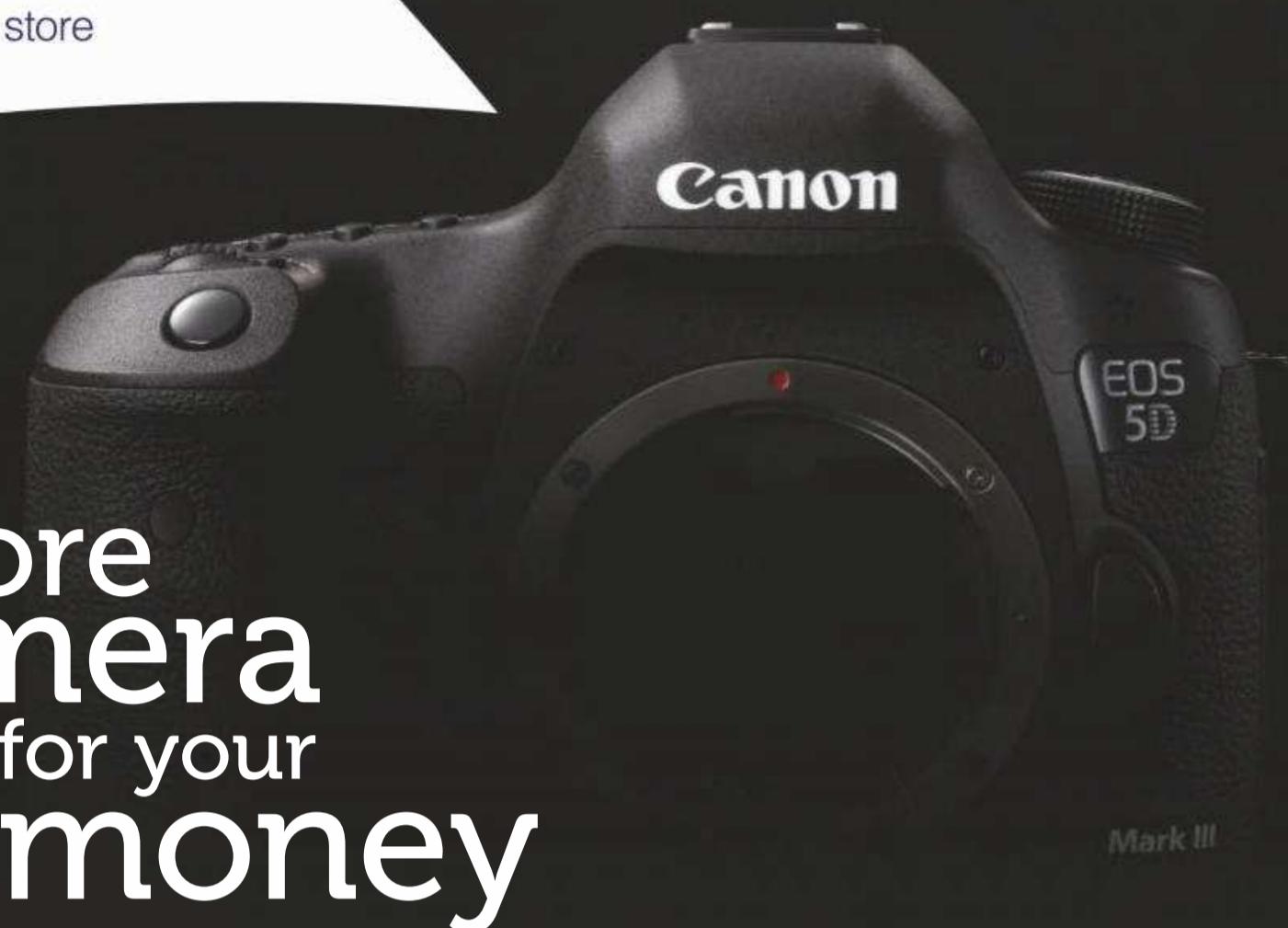
ALSO IN THE RANGE

If you prefer slinging your bag over one shoulder rather than two, you may like the Manfrotto Noreg Messenger 30. Like the Noreg 30 backpack reviewed above, the internal camera compartment is removable and can accommodate a premium mirrorless camera with standard zoom lens attached plus up to two additional lenses. It features a press top for instant access to your kit from your hip and has an identical 15in laptop compartment that can be detached. This feature-packed messenger costs £129 and has the same grey-camouflage styling with flashes of red.





online, by phone or in store



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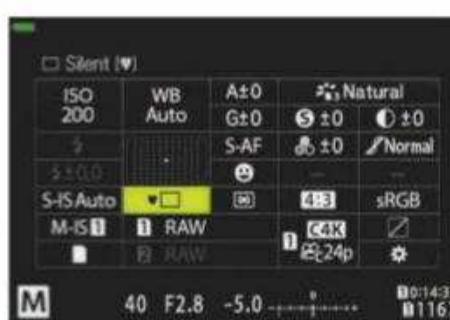
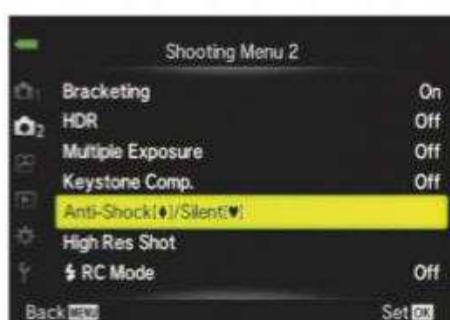
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How to make flash work in silent mode?

Q I have noticed that on my Olympus OM-D E-M1 Mark II when I select silent shutter mode the flash symbol is greyed out when I try to use my FL-300R and the flash doesn't fire. I would really like to be able to use flash in silent mode, even though the E-M1 Mark II has a pretty quiet mechanical shutter. Any advice?

Seamus Longford

A Olympus decided that the default setting for allowing flash in silent shutter mode should be – don't. The reasoning seems to be that if you're using silent shutter mode in order to be unobtrusive, flash could be an accident you'd want to avoid. Thankfully, as with most settings in Olympus cameras, you



Enable silent shutter mode from the second menu – select Anti-shock/Silent, then Silent Mode Settings

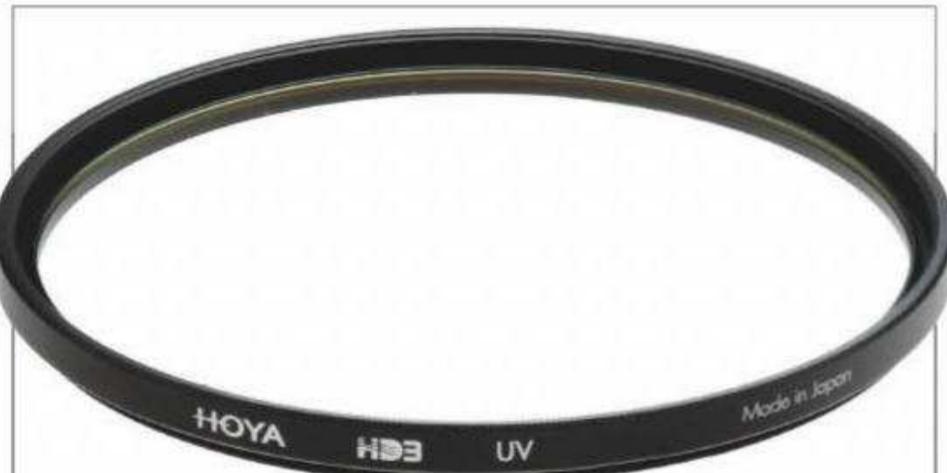
can customise them, though it's obscure and a headache to work out. Go to the second shooting menu from the main menu page, then select Anti-shock/Silent, then Silent Mode Settings (see below left). Once in, you can re-enable flash in silent shooting, as well as focus beeps and the focus illuminator, if required.

Sloping images

Q Having shortly returned from a trip to The Lakes, I find that the majority of my images have a slope on them. It's very obvious where images include lakes or tarns, one side of the water is noticeably higher on one side of the image than the other. I was aware of an issue while taking shots and on occasions did tilt the camera so that the image appeared level through the viewfinder. However, at the time I assumed that the issue would likely only be present through the viewfinder and not on the captured image. I was using two Canon EOS 350D bodies with different lenses. In both set-ups, the slope is present. The only things I can think of that were common to both are that prior to the trip, I had the sensors cleaned on both and adjusted the dioptic setting on each camera. If one of the lenses could in any way have caused the issue, they were swapped a few times between the camera bodies before the trip. I'd appreciate any suggestions.

Martin350d (AP forum)

A It's extremely unlikely that both cameras' sensors were misaligned and even less so that any misalignment would be the same for both cameras. Some DSLR viewfinders don't show precisely the same view as the sensor, but any difference is usually very minor and primarily in the percentage of the view seen by the sensor rather than the alignment. In other words the



If a UV filter gets dirty, this may cause focusing problems

Will a UV filter affect a lens's AF speed?

Q I am considering the use of a protective UV filter for my new Canon EF 70-200mm f/4 L IS USM lens. I use a Canon EOS 6D Mark II. However, a mate of mine who is also into photography told me that UV filters can affect the focusing speed. I am half thinking he's having a laugh at my expense but after some brief research online this question does come up from time to time, though there doesn't seem to be a clear-cut answer. Can you shed any light on this?

Ben Halliday

A While some types of filter will more than likely play havoc with an SLR's focusing system – old-style linear polarising filters or very dark neutral density (ND) filters, for example – it's not at all obvious how a standard UV filter could cause problems with proper use. The only thing I can think of is that if the filter gets dirty or droplets of water are deposited on the filter surface, this would cause focusing problems. The quality of the filter could be a factor, but only under very adverse conditions where flare suppression was inadequate, perhaps because of poor or absent anti-reflection coatings. The question of whether or not to use a protective filter is a very divisive issue among photographers. My own observation is that it's a much less popular choice than it used to be.

viewfinder view, especially in more budget-spec models like the 350D, is likely to cover slightly less than you will see in the final shot. It should be easy to check that everything is aligned. The 350D does not have a live-view mode displayed on its rear screen but if you place the camera on a level surface and take a shot, you should see that the scene recorded is also level. Far more likely is the possibility that your natural handling of the

camera is a bit lop-sided. This happens with everyone to a greater or lesser degree and is quite normal. Digital level indicators are now popular features in more recent cameras for this very reason. Compensation is fairly straightforward but it's easy to forget. Thankfully, sloping images are easy to correct in post-processing.

Q&A compiled by Ian Burley

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Professor Newman on...

Measuring sharpness

Bob Newman explores the different methods and protocols for defining a sharp lens

For generations photographers have valued a very 'sharp' lens. The only problem is, how do you tell what is a 'sharp' lens? When I first started to become interested in such things the metric was 'line pairs per millimetre'. The way this was measured was to photograph a test target consisting of alternate stripes of black and white. The test chart would display stripes which photographed at different sizes in the final image (see illustration below, showing the 1951 USAF test chart, a classic in the world of test charts). A line pair is an adjacent black and white line, and the resolution in 'line pairs per millimetre' is taken as when the line pair can just be distinguished as a black line separate from a white line.

The point at which the lines are barely distinguishable is not well defined, being subject to human perception. The original USAF test protocols mandated how the images would be displayed, and the judgement as to when the lines were distinguishable would be made by a number of observers. A more objective method was developed, whereby the contrast ratio between the 'black' and 'white' could be measured by a photocell. This formed the basis of the 'modulation transfer function', (MTF).

'The way this was measured was to photograph a test target consisting of alternate stripes of black and white'

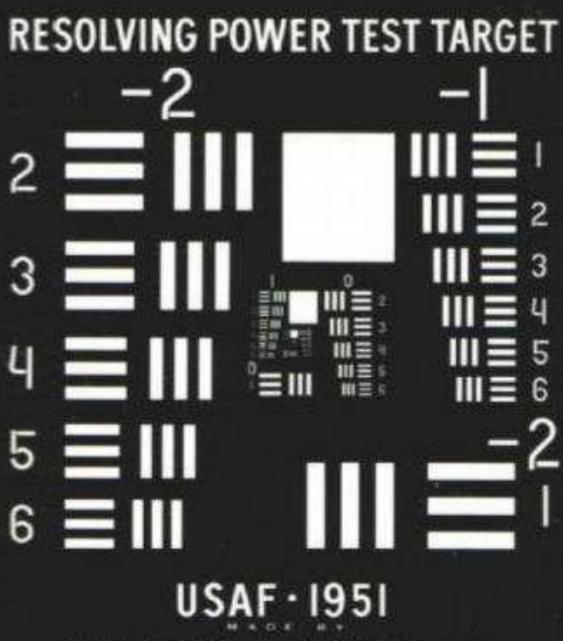
Nowadays the reference point that has supplanted the 'just distinguishable' criterion is a contrast between the black and white of 2:1 or '50%' (that is, the measured level of the 'black' is half that of the 'white'). This is referred to as 'MTF50' and forms the basis of the majority of today's lens testing. In an MTF graph the notion of 'line pair' is replaced with a 'cycle' – the density of the 'lines' follows a sinusoidal profile.

Alternative metrics

A full MTF chart contains much more information than that single 50% point. Dr Hubert Nasse of Zeiss has produced a pair of excellent articles on how to interpret MTF curves, which are available online (Part 1 at <http://lenspire.zeiss.com/photo/app/uploads/2018/04/Article-MTF-2008-EN.pdf>, and Part 2 at http://lenspire.zeiss.com/photo/app/uploads/2018/04/CLN_MTF_Kurven_2_en.pdf)

One thing that becomes apparent is that equality of the cycle count at 50% contrast does not imply equality at any other contrast ratio, so lenses with equal MTF50 ratings can have very different performance at other contrast ratios. Thus, the MTF50 rating, for all its popularity, does not provide anything like a complete measurement of perceived lens 'sharpness'.

There have been attempts to define alternative metrics which provide a better match to perceived image sharpness, perhaps the most famous one being 'Subjective Quality Factor' (SQF) proposed by Granger and Cupery in 1972. Rather than measuring the point at which the curve reaches 50%, this measures the area under the curve. The assumption is, that it is the contrast at lower spatial frequencies (fewer cycles) that is more apparent to the viewer and provides the appearance of contrast. Although it was popular for a period (and is still used by the American magazine *Popular Photography*, for their lens tests) it has failed to become a generally accepted measure of lens quality. The reason for this is probably because the perceived quality of a lens is just too complicated to be expressed as a simple number.



The US Air Force resolution test chart, devised in 1951, was a standardised way of measuring resolution for many years

Bob Newman is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob is also a camera nut and a keen amateur photographer

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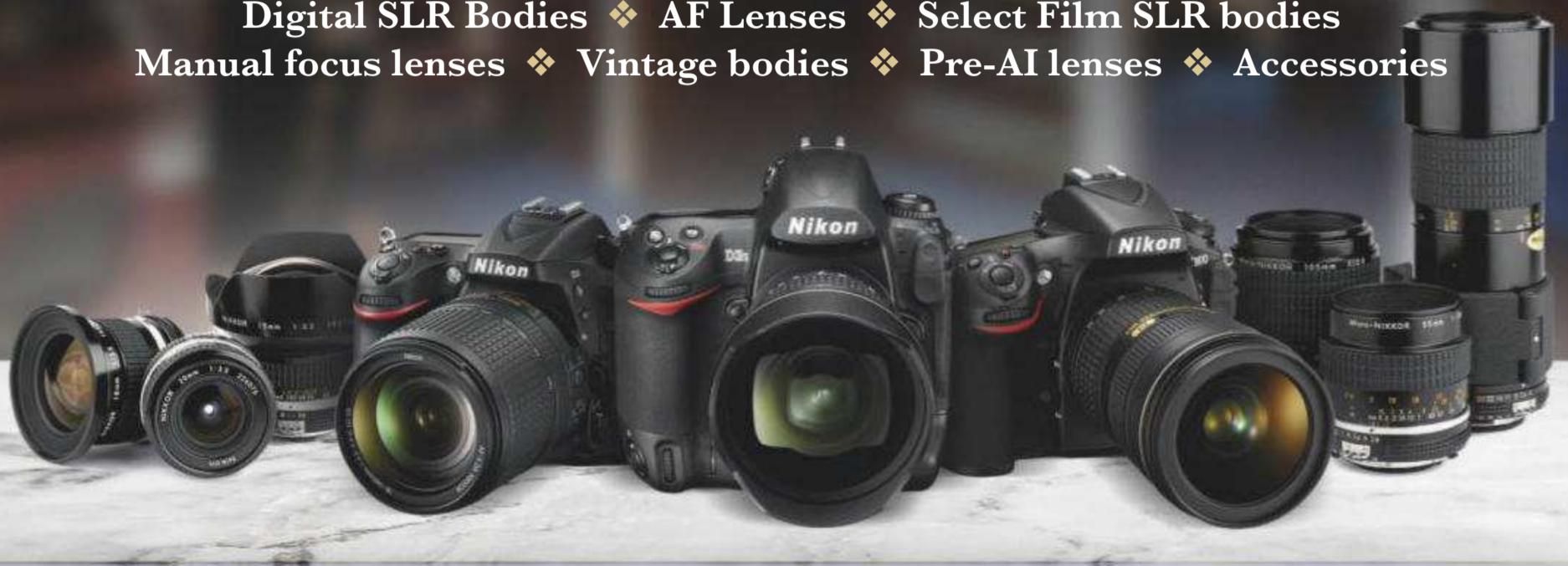
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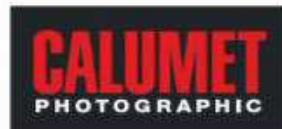
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14mm F2.5 Asph	E+ £119	65mm F2.8 MP-E Macro	E+ £679
14mm F2.5 Asph II	Mint- £219	70-200mm F2.8 L IS USM II	E++ / Mint- £1,249 - £1,369
20mm F1.7 G Pancake	E++ / Mint- £159	70-200mm F4 L IS USM	E++ £569
25mm F1.4 DG Summilux	E++ £279 - £299	70-300mm F4-5.6 L IS USM	E+ £739
45-150mm F4-5.6 Asph OIS	E++ / Mint- £129 - £139	75-300mm F4-5.6 IS USM	E++ £199
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Olympus 12-40mm F2.8 M.Zuiko	E++ / Mint- £539 - £589	85mm F1.8 USM	E+ / E++ £199 - £259
12mm F2 ED M.Zuiko - Silver	E++ / Mint- £379 - £399	90-300mm F4.5-5.6 EF	E++ £79
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45mm F1.8 M.Zuiko	E+ / Mint- £149 - £179	400mm F2.8 L IS USM	E+ / E++ £3,689 - £3,889
75mm F1.8 ED M.Zuiko - Silver	E++ / Mint- £449 - £469	400mm F2.8 L USM	E+ £2,449

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10-18mm F4 E OSS	Mint- £499 - £539	500mm F4 L IS USM MKII	E+ / E++ £5,950 - £5,995
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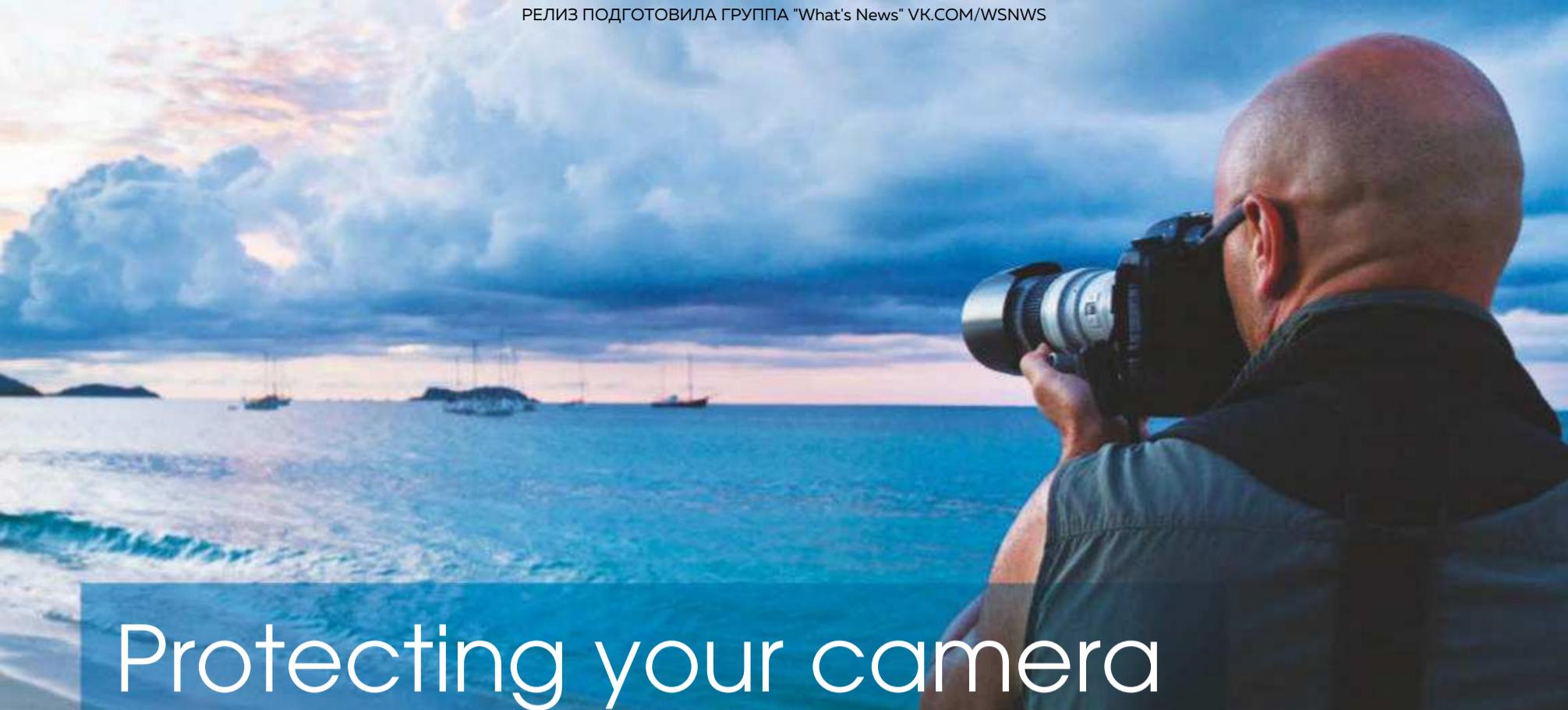


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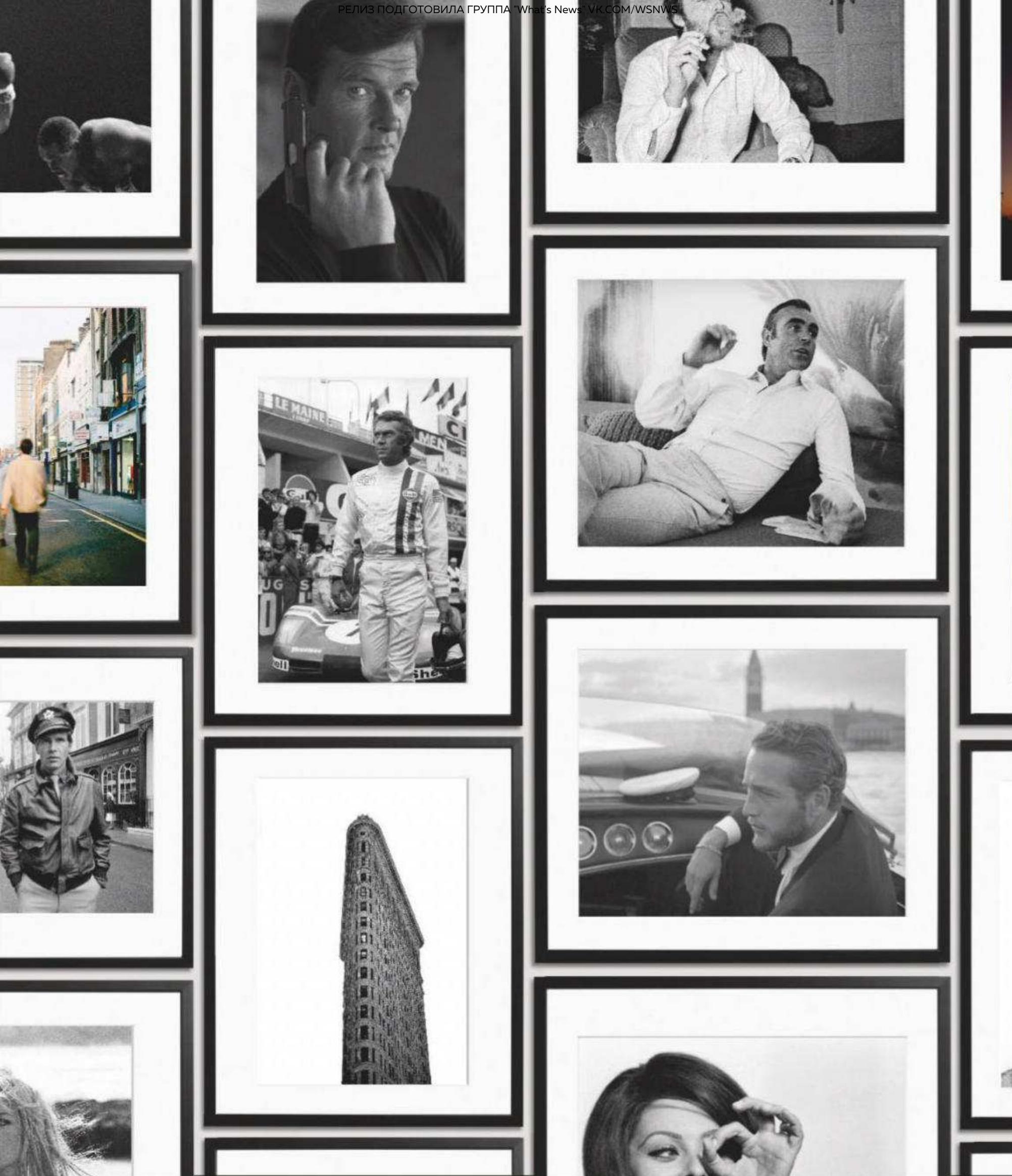
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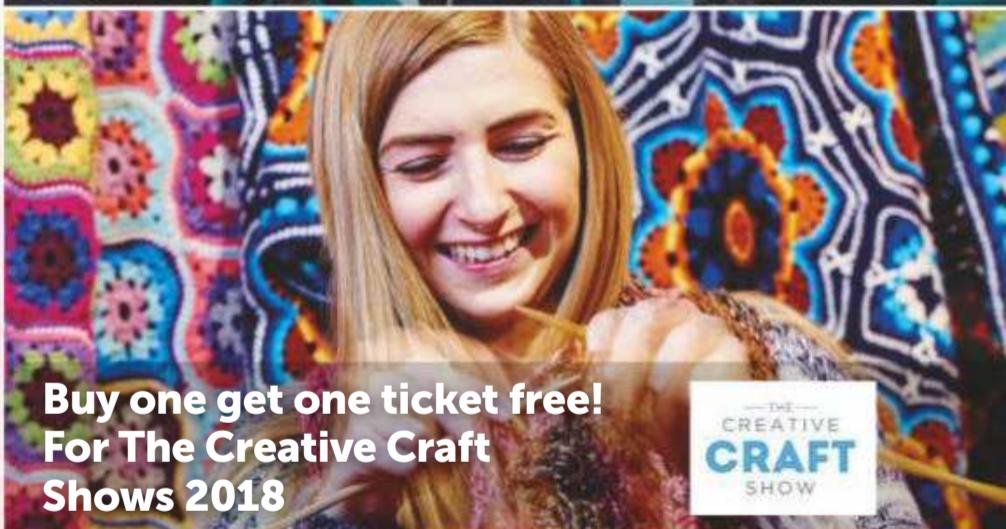
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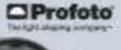


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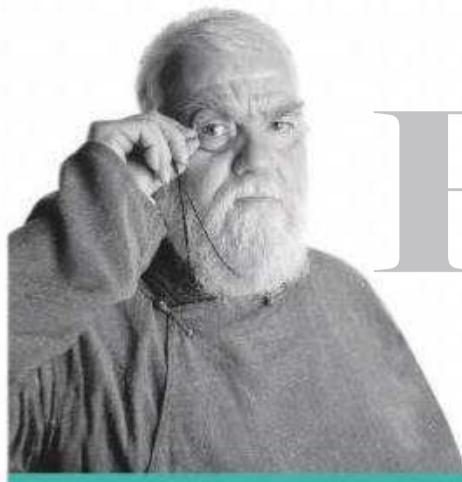
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Final Analysis

Roger Hicks considers... 'Miss Chapman', circa 1860, from the Brady-Handy Collection

Normally, if you notice details more than the picture itself it suggests failure; except that details can become more and more interesting as time passes.

This is a perfectly competent portrait from a major Washington studio – Brady was Matt Brady of Civil War fame – via the US Library of Congress. First, though, how was it cropped for framing? Today, edge artefacts are often included as evidence of 'authenticity', but then, photography was still a very new art: the aim was usually perfection or as close to it as could be achieved.

Picking out the detail

On one side, her skirt goes out of shot, an old trick for suggesting both opulence and authenticity, but how much did they crop from the other side? Some of the bottom clearly had to go, and we may fairly assume that they 'lost' quite a bit of the top; though what appears to be a reference number may have been added later.

Next, the backdrop. The fabric hangs like brocade and ought to look unbalanced. Somehow, it doesn't. Instead, it looks opulent.

Then there are the clothes. The striped dress foreshadows the Kodak girls of the early 20th century, but although machine-made lace had been introduced as early as 1809, it was still not cheap, and apart from the lace-work on the dress (which does not look machine made), all the handwork in piecing together the different laces in the cape again bespeaks affluence. A black velvet band around her neck, with a heart locket, and a black veil (which creates an unfortunate line across her chin), almost suggest mourning; for at the time, mourning dress was by no means always or unrelievedly black. This was, remember, the time of Bleeding Kansas and later the War Between the States. She still wanted to look good, though: she was grievously heavily corseted.

'As a well-bred young woman she would of course have had no trace of a suntan'

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Finally there is the tonality. Wet plates were sensitive only to blue light, so reds were rendered very dark; and yet her skin looks entirely natural. As a well-bred young woman she would of course have had no trace of a sun tan, but if her face was powdered for this shot would she have done it herself, or would the photographer

have employed a make-up assistant to do it for her?

Subject to these questions, we know how the picture was taken: wet-plate collodion, almost surely in a daylight studio. We don't know why or for whom; and yet we can still look straight into the eyes of a young woman from around 160 years ago.

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